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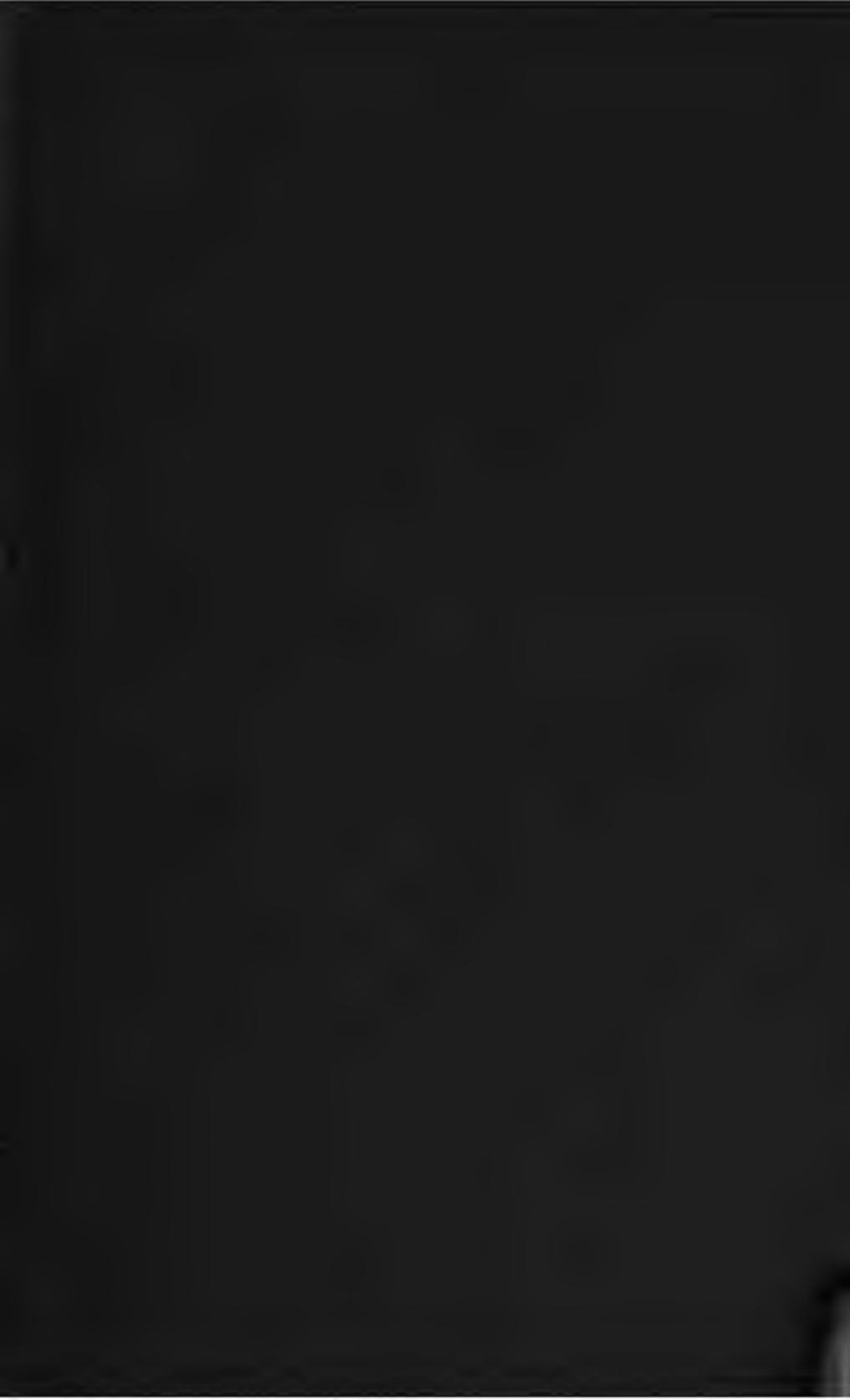


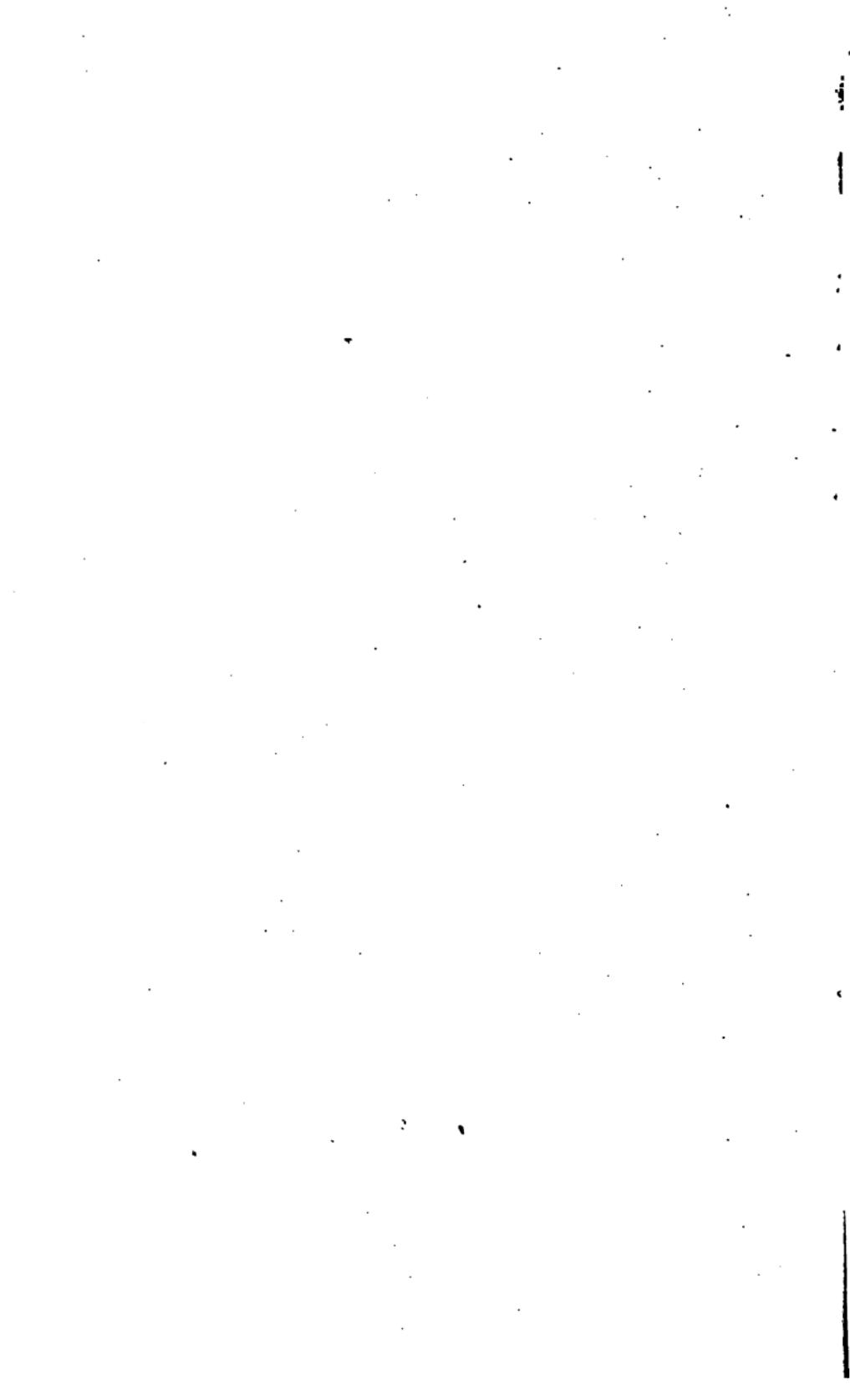
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FROM

Prof. F. J. Child,
of Cambridge.

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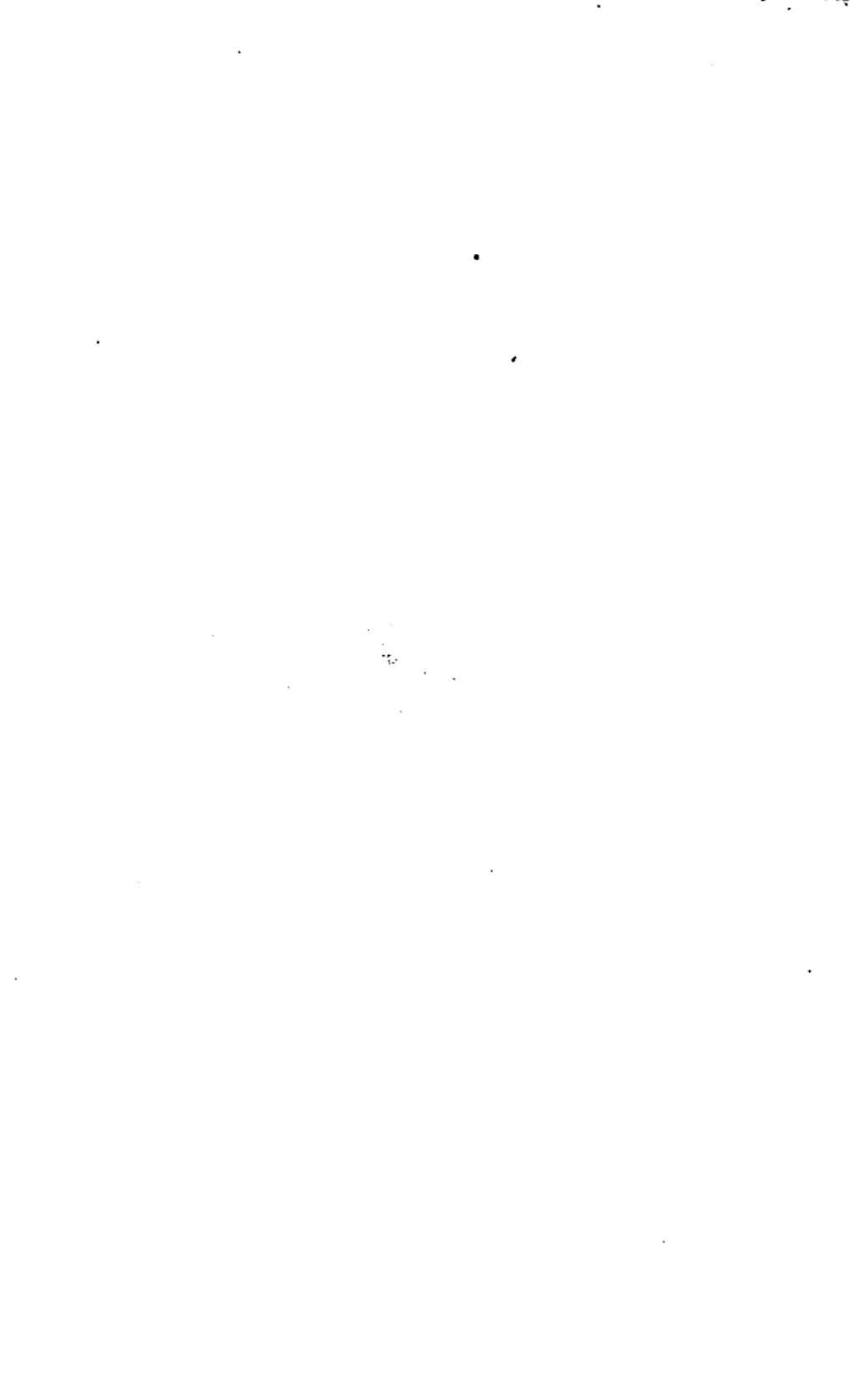
To
Professor F. J. Child
with kind regards from
Robert White.

26th August 1873.

P O E M S.

Mr White died
(at Newcastle-upon-Tyne)
Feb. 20. 1874.







Yours truly
Robert White.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert White". It is positioned below the printed name and above a decorative flourish.

0

P O E M S :

INCLUDING TALES, BALLADS,
AND SONGS.

BY
ROBERT WHITE.

C
K E L S O :
J. & J. H. RUTHERFURD, 17, SQUARE.
LONGMAN & Co., PATERNOSTER Row, LONDON.
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Prof. F. J. Child,
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J. AND J. H. RUTHERFURD, PRINTERS, KELSO.

CONTENTS.

	Tales.	PAGE
EDWIN		1
KATE RIDLEY		113
 <i>Poems.</i> 		
ENGLAND		149
SCOTLAND		164
PISTLE TO MR. JAMES TELFER		169
PISTLE TO CAPT. CHARLES GRAY, R.M.		177
REFLECTIONS OF AN ENGLISH PEASANT		184
THE CONTRAST		192
THE HIGHLAND EMIGRANT		198
OTTERBURNE		203
TO A DAISY		205
GOING HOME		207
A PARENT'S GRAVE		211
THE TRAVELLER		213
TO A FRIEND		217
FREEDOM		221
MY CHILD		223
MY NATIVE LAND		225
STANZAS		228
TO MARY		230

TO A LADY	231
TO ELIZA	233
ADMONITION	234
STANZAS	236
TO HELEN	237
IMPROPTU	238
TO MARY	239
TO A FEMALE FRIEND	241
CHASING CUPID	244
INSTRUCTIONS TO A PAINTER	248
MORNING	252
CUPID AND DEATH	254
THE DYING KNIGHT	257
THE CAGED BIRD	260
PLEASURES OF THE COUNTRY	262
INSCRIPTION	264
SONNETS—I. A COMPARISON	265
II. WRITTEN AFTER A JOURNEY TO SCOTLAND	266
III. LOVE	266
IV. A DREAM	267
V. A MOTHER TO HER CHILD	268
VI. WRITTEN IN MY THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR	268
VII. ON THE REV. JOHN HODGSON	269
VIII. ON THE SAME	270

Ballads.

YOUNG ALLAN	273
LADY JEAN	277
EARL MORAY'S CAPTURE	281
SIR GILBERT HAMILTON	286

THE ARM OF WALLACE	290
LIGHTING OF THE BEACONS	294

Songs.

BONNIE COQUET-SIDE	300
THE KNIGHT'S RETURN	302
THE MAID WHOM I ADORE	304
THE REDESDALE LASSIE	305
INVITATION	307
MY NATIVE BOWER	309
EDITH ELLISON	311
HER I LOVE BEST	312
ELLEN	314
SWEET NATURE	316
A SHEPHERD'S LIFE	317
YES OR NO	319
TO PLEASE YE	320
SONG BEFORE BATTLE	322
DRINKING SONG	324
NURSERY SONG	326
FISHERS' GARLANDS—I. VISIT TO REDESDALE	328
II. COQUET-SIDE	330

Sweet Poesy has ever been to me
Like the resplendent beams of Truth divine,
A light amid the darkness of the world,
Imparting life to every joyful sense—
Shewing me beauty in unnoticed things,
And making fairest objects lovelier still.

Tales.



EDWIN:

A NORTHUMBRIAN TALE.

“And having sworn truth, ever will be true.”

SHAKESPEARE.



TO HER GRACE
THE MOST NOBLE
ELEANOR,
DUCHESS OF NORTHUMBERLAND,
WHO FULLY APPRECIATED, AND PERSONALLY AIDED
IN CARRYING INTO EFFECT,
FOR THE
PERMANENT BENEFIT OF OTHERS,
THE MUNIFICENT AND CONSIDERATE VIEWS
OF HER
LATE NOBLE HUSBAND,
THIS TALE,
BY HER GRACE'S PERMISSION,
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY
INSCRIBED.



ADVERTISEMENT.

In 1297 Sir William Wallace, with the Scottish army, entered Northumberland by the Eastern Border on the Feast of St. Luke (18th October), and remained in England till St. Martin's Day (11th November), when undoubtedly great devastation and waste of life occurred. That period has been selected whereon to found the following Tale, as it affords ample scope for scenes and events applicable to the framework of a fictitious narrative.

The action of the story is comprised within five successive days.

EDWIN:

A NORTHUMBRIAN TALE

INTRODUCTION.

NORTHUMBERLAND, I scarce can tell
Why all thy scenes I love so well ;
For in thy limits every hill,
Each lonely cairn and rushing rill,
Each shelter'd strip of stunted wood,
Thy quiet nooks of solitude,
Thy liquid fountains gushing clear,
All on my memory linger dear ;
Nor less do I delight to trace
On hill or dale each noted place,
Connected with a former age,
That glows upon thy storied page.
How sweet amid such haunts to stand,
While Fancy waves her magic wand,
And conjures up before the sight
Thy men of enterprise and might,
Who, living in a troubled time,
Pass'd not away unstain'd by crime ;

Yet there they struggled, there in strife
They closed their wild and stirring life,
Giving an interest to the spot
That is not to this hour forgot.

Kind Nature of herself may spread,
From ocean verge to mountain head,
Her smiling landscapes passing fair,
That Beauty may inhabit there ;
Or else she can, in majesty,
Throw rock and headland to the sky,
Showing of solemn grandeur more
Than she reveal'd of grace before ;
Still may she not through all her reign
To higher, mightier power attain.
But different far the rudest sod
That energetic man has trod.
Whether he drew upon his mind
Or battled fiercely with his kind,
Where he survived or where he fell,
The place will be remember'd well.
We thus the poet's haunts revere ;
The scenes he loved to us are dear ;
May western regions, dark with pine,
Presume to vie with Palestine ?
And even at home we gaze around
On what is sacred, classic ground :
Flodden was noted long ago
For Scotland's mournful overthrow ;
Now mark how by the Minstrel's might
Its field, embattled, glows in light,
Commanding, on through future time,
Attention meet from every clime !

So Redeswire¹ high hath sounded wide ;
And Otterburne, where Douglas died,
Over the world shall echo long
In the rude lines of Border song.
We seek not these for balmy air—
For scenery picturesque or fair ;
But feel a charm by human hand
Imparted we may not withstand :
The spell, resistless, we obey,
Unwilling even to turn away.

Thus, loved Northumberland, had I
The painter's cunning hand and eye,
Thy ruin'd castles stern and gray,
Lone relics of a former day—
Thy battle fields where heroes brave
Met foot to foot with spear and glaive—
Thy other spots that tell of yore,
Hallow'd by legendary lore,
Should, as my skill their forms could trace,
Upon my canvas find a place.
But since the harp through every scene
Of life to me hath solace been,
Why may not I in earnest strain
Attempt to wake its notes again,
And take a subject for my lay
That shadows forth thine early day,
When WALLACE, first of patriots, trod
With hostile foot thy valleys broad ;
And bid the while thy scenery pass
Before my view as in a glass ?

¹ See Ballad—"The Raid of the Redeswire."

Yea, as the artist will include,
To break his sombre solitude,
A group of figures, I may claim
Freedom and privilege the same !
Before me, lo ! the vision springs ;
Then be my hand across the strings
With energetic fervour flung,
And boldly be the numbers sung !

EDWIN.

CANTO THE FIRST.

I.

THROUGHOUT North Tyne the fading year
Had made the woodlands brown and sear ;
October's wild and boisterous breath
Blighted the bells on Hareshaw heath,
And rudely sent its sleety showers
Whistling through Nunwick's shelter'd bowers ;
The meads were of their verdure shorn—
Gather'd the scanty crops of corn.
The wandering stream from Keilder high
Flow'd on in changeful melody,
Increasing as it swept along,
While Rede united in the song ;
But lo ! the waves more gently glide
Where Chipchase rises in its pride.
Within that keep of massive stone
Is Alice pent—a captive lone :
Selby, a knight from Cumberland,
Made earnest suit to win her hand ;
His words were fair, his manner bold,
Yet was the maiden shy and cold :
Her sire De Lisle, a warrior stern,
When he her wayward mood did learn.

To anger roused that she, his child,
Who erst had gentle been and mild,
Should dare to set his wish aside,
Refusing to be Selby's bride,
Asserted o'er the maid his power,
And placed her in the highest tower.

II.

De Lisle was now advanced in life ;
But for the crown in war and strife
An active part he ever bore—
His monarch loved him more and more.
A widower he—she died his mate,
Nor did he change again his state :
His only son he deem'd him lost
Where Wallace led the Scottish host
At Stirling bridge in hapless hour,
And vanquish'd England's mighty power ;
Himself with Selby 'scaped the strife,
And his own home he reach'd in life ;
But heavily he bore his grief,
Nor morn nor evening brought relief :
Thus trifles came to jar his mind,
Even when to peace or rest inclined.
True, he did love fair Alice well,
Yet doom'd her thus to lonely cell,
And that his gloom he might allay,
Eastward he rode by break of day,
Issuing command that spears¹ a few
Their way to Mitford would pursue.

¹ The cavalry in Border warfare, being constantly armed with long spears, took their name from that weapon.

III.

Now to our tale :—Soon as De Lisle
Was gone, a youngster, Ernest Pyle,
Page to Dame Heron, mounted horse,
And northward quickly held his course :
On, on he sped, nor bridle drew
Till Waney crags rose in his view ;
Then for a space his horse's feet
Traversed the ancient Watling street,
Form'd by the sons of haughty Rome
Who chose Britannia for their home.
Ascending next on higher ground,
He slack'd his speed, and look'd around ;
Up Redesdale soon his eye was bent,
And feelings warm in tears had vent—
A father's loss he once did mourn ;
But now at lovely Otterburne,
Tipt with the sunshine warm and bright,
His mother's cottage stood in sight.—
Strange, that however far we roam,
No spot is like our early home !

IV.

Lisle's burn he cross'd, and, skirting high
The rugged hills that eastward lie,
Onward by Raylees wood he pass'd,
Where shrivell'd leaves descended fast ;
But when he rode o'er Elsden green
He saw a new and stirring scene ;
Aloft a flag, the Rector's, stream'd,
While waving swords and lances gleam'd ;

Horses caparison'd were there,
And yeomen walk'd with hurried air.
He found his mistress where she stay'd,
And humble reverence to her paid—
Told her the message he had brought,
When she, absorb'd in silent thought,
Let moments pass, before her eye
Was raised from earth to make reply.
“Home I must go,” the matron said,
“Poor Alice Lisle requires my aid ;
Make ready, Ernest, for the way :
The Scots may not arrive to-day.”—
‘Twas then the page might understand
The foe was in Northumberland.

v.

When ready mounted was the Dame,
The aged Rector kindly came,
And bless'd her as she rode away
Upon her ambling palfrey gray.
She seem'd near fifty years of age,
Gentle in look, sedate and sage ;
Her eyes were of a hazel hue
Whose glance might pierce a bosom through ;
Although the mildness of her face
Reveal'd such kindness and grace,
A wandering child on gazing there
Had fled for pity to her care.
Yet lines were seen that briefly told
What waves of grief had o'er her roll'd—
What ties—the dearest to her heart—
Had erst been rudely rent apart.

And more—her voice of silvery tone
Proved how she had through trials gone.
Simple her garb—a mantle meet
Flow'd loosely down below her feet ;
A band confined it round her waist ;
The head and neck a wimple¹ graced :
Her figure show'd, when partly seen,
How beautiful it once had been.

VI.

Ernest the page in order due
Behind the Dame his pony drew ;
A faithful youth he was, and shared
Fully her kind and just regard.
The wind play'd through his flowing hair,
Ruddy his face, his skin was fair ;
Of woollen cloth a cap he wore,
A gabardine made fast before ;
At his left side a hunting knife,
Useful alike in peace or strife.
He ever kept his mistress near,
Ready her slightest word to hear ;
And as they reach'd the highest hill
His eye would wander westward still,
Where Otterburne in chiming speed
United with the willowy Rede.
Brown moorfowl oft by sudden spring
Rose up before them on the wing,

¹ The wimple was a female head-dress first used in England about the close of the twelfth century. It consisted of a round cap for the head curiously plaited, with a kind of small semicircular curtain to shade the neck and fall upon the shoulders, leaving the face open.

And two fair stags with antlers high,
Careering westward, bounded by :
Long heath and furze waved on the fell,
Thick copsewood grew in every dell.

VIL

They cross'd at length a tiny brook,
And up the bank their way they took ;
But lo ! what strikes them with surprise ?
Crowning the height before their eyes,
A hundred horsemen round them drew,
And a broad banner was in view,
Where in a ruddy field so bright
A silvery lion rear'd upright—
Brave Wallace' arms, who with his band
Had come to waste Northumberland.
A leveret 'neath a fox's paw—
A dove within an eagle's claw—
Feel as Dame Heron when she found
Herself and Ernest hemm'd around.
But she, as if devoid of fear,
Address'd a reverend horseman near,
That by his garment look'd as one
Whom holy church had made her son,
And from the cross he wore display'd
Seem'd likeliest to yield her aid :—
“ So please you, master, may I pray
That we, unharmed, pursue our way ?”—
“ Good madam, know you, these are foes
That with their weapons round you close :
Where is your home, and what your name,
That clemency from us you claim ?”—

VIII.

“From Elsden, please you, we have come ;
To Swinburne are we going home ;
Heron’ my name—long years are gone
Since I of all was left alone ;
This youth my servant is, and we
Will give you thanks to set us free.”—
Then Grimesby¹ gently waved his hand
To one, a guide, who near did stand,
And ask’d him as he forward came :—
“Canst tell us, Edwin, of the Dame ?”—
“Well known is she,” replied the youth,
“Both for her gentleness and truth :
Her husband fell when Wales arose
In battle ’gainst her English foes ;
And if a boon I sought of thee,
’Twould be this matron’s liberty.”—
But Wallace now appear’d in view,
When the grave churchman near him drew ;
Of her they spoke, while Edwin nigh
Gave when they ask’d a fair reply :

¹ Gilbert Grimesby was a Scottish vicar of Beverley College, being born in the district of Kyle in Ayrshire. He spent a great part of his life as pursuivant to Edward I. of England during his wars in France. He was appointed by Anthony Beke, Bishop of Durham, to bear the consecrated banner of St. John of Beverley when that prelate in 1296 joined the king of England with his force of fighting men, previous to the siege of Berwick. Preferment was offered to him by Edward, but this did not prevent him from espousing the cause of Scotland when Wallace attempted the liberation of that kingdom. His intimate knowledge of England enabled him to perform the office of herald or guide to the Scottish army, and he occasionally marshalled the battalions for battle. Stern in appearance, and of great stature, he was called *Jop* by the Scots.—CARRICK’S *Life of Wallace*.

Then Grimesby to Dame Heron went,
 And thus unfolded his intent :—
 “ We stay you not, so onward wend ;
 Your worthy husband was my friend ;
 We were in league of amity,
 And I must service yield to thee.
 Our forayers o'er the country swarm,
 And lest they meet or mean thee harm,
 Here is a warrior tried and good,
 Sprung from redoubted Robin Hood :
 In flush of youth though Edwin be,
 He guards you safe from jeopardy,
 Or they who mar his course will feel
 The force and sharpness of his steel.”—

IX.

Honour and thanks the matron paid,
 While Edwin ready stood array'd,
 And with her gently rode away,
 Follow'd by Ernest blithe and gay,
 Who smiled to see the youth again
 He follow'd once o'er hill and plain,
 The salmon in the stream to spear,
 The hare to hunt and shoot the deer.
 Now Edwin, stately, bland, and fair,
 Open'd his helm to breathe the air :
 Light was the armour that he wore,
 And long the trusty lance he bore ;
 The brand was by his side and low,
 His battle axe at saddle bow ;
 Dark was the charger he bestrode,
 And near the matron's side he rode.

Of his strange history much she knew,
And glanced as she would look him through ;
With tears a gush of feeling came
That moved and shook her very frame ;
Yet with a gentle, modest grace,
All dignified she kept her place,
And gave her mettled palfrey rein
Until her breast was calm again.

X.

“ I feel obliged,” the matron said,
“ That we have thus obtain’d your aid ;
But how, when you are outlaw’d here,
Ride you thus forth devoid of fear—
Were Lisle to meet you, or his men,
What prowess would avail you then ?”—
“ Madam,” said he, “ a soldier tried
Puts every sense of fear aside
When he has duty to perform ;
And here, why should I think of harm ?
If danger come, with spear and glaive
Be mine my honour’d charge to save ;
As for myself, whate’er the strife,
I fight for liberty and life.
Now, mistress, of your kindness show
What above all I wish to know :—
Is Alice Lisle at Chipchase still ?—
Come tell me of her if you will.”—
“ She lingers there,” replied the Dame ;
“ Her love for thee is still the same ;
But she is by her father’s power
A lonely captive in his tower.”—

XL.

Full well it was to Edwin known
What kindness steadfastly had grown
Between the Dame and Alice Lisle,
And hence he question'd her the while :
The matron took it well in part,
And thus she open'd more her heart :—
“ Be calm—be wise—yea ask of Heaven
Its bounty may to thee be given,
And Alice dear among the rest
Of gifts divine may make you bless'd.
Poor hapless maid, from Cumberland
Sir Haward Selby sought her hand :
He woo'd and sigh'd, but all in vain ;
She heard not his affected strain.
Her father, chafed that she would not
With such a suitor blend her lot,
Confined her in his fortress high,
And not a female comes her nigh,
Save her aunt Dora, good and kind,
Who often cheers her drooping mind ;
Besides a harper lately came—
A stranger—Owen is his name,
And he with music, song, or rhyme
Strives to beguile the flagging time ;
But though she prize his tuneful art,
He, ere to-morrow, may depart.

XII.

“ I speak,” continued she, “ to you
As to a friend, for much you know :

Though of her father's smiles bereft,
Alone young Alice is not left ;
Around her guardian angels play
And watch her duly night and day,
Keeping her safe from wicked wile,
And warding from her fraud or guile.
Glisker the sprite, though ages old,
Of whom our grandsires often told,
At opening morn, or dusky eve,
His liquid haunts in Tyne will leave,
And, viewless often as the breeze,
Attempt the lonely maid to please,
By sounding on his writhed shell
The simple airs she loves so well ;
And, ever ready, strives with speed
To aid her in the hour of need.
But since to Chipchase Selby came
It seems that Glisker's only aim
Is to annoy and vex the knight,
Or fix him in a woeful plight :
Selby, when mounting once his horse,
Perceived the fiend with grovelling force
Among his charger's legs rush past,
While he upon the earth was cast :
Glisker's unearthly laugh rose high,
But nothing more could Selby spy."—

XIII.

Of Glisker much did Edwin know,
Who heard his story long ago ;
And thus it ran :—He had his birth
Perchance in water—not on earth :

Before the Word of Truth divine
Had reach'd the valley of the Tyne,
The river nymphs, with slender feet,
Each summer night, to measures meet,
Danced on the greensward near the stream
Where shone fair Cynthia's silvery beam.
A youthful lord of Chipchase tower,
Who watch'd them in a woodland bower,
Clift her, the fairest, from the rest,
And held her in his leafy nest,
Until the morn with purple dye
Began to streak the eastern sky,
When she escaped his amorous hold,
And plunged within the water cold ;
The other nymphs with mournful strain
Departed thence, nor came again.
Time sped away, and oft at night
The mother brought her nursling light,
And laid him near his father's bed,
Yet still ere morning both were fled.
By Tyne for years that lord would wind
At dusky eve his love to find ;
But he beheld her never more,
And long her loss he did deplore :
Of all his wandering eye survey'd,
Not one could match his pliant maid,
Who seem'd like Venus from the sea,
With form of perfect symmetry :
Since then the sprite that from them sprung
Was recognised by old and young.

XIV.

Rode Edwin at the Dame's right hand,
Of courteous speech and manner bland ;
Ernest the page still kept behind,
And by a hill as they did wind
A sound they heard, and, looking back,
Saw mounted horsemen cross the track,
Who eastward moved in armour bright,
Which caught the sun's declining light.
Onward the Dame and Edwin rode ;
But when they near'd her own abode,
Thus said she in confiding strain :—
“ Now, Edwin, you return again ;
I thank you for the kindness shown
To me, and as you fare alone
I trust no evil or dismay
Will overtake you on your way.
A word respecting Alice fair :—
To Chipchase tower will I repair,
And tell her all of fortune's tide,
How you were placed to be my guide.
Yea more—to-morrow when the sun
His highest noontide point has won,
At the Deer oak, or near that tree,
Yourself a patient lingerer be :
If sight of Alice dear be given,
Let thanks be offer'd up to heaven.”—

XV.

All grateful, Edwin's bosom burn'd,
When he the compliment return'd

In modest terms as best he could,
 Then drew his rein in pensive mood.
 To Ernest, as he pass'd the while,
 He gave a kindly word and smile,—
 Inform'd him where the camp was set,
 Feeling delighted they had met ;
 So took his leave to journey forth,
 And gravely turn'd him to the north.
 Well known the wilds before him lay,
 Though rough and broken was the way ;
 And gazing round, at rapid speed
 He onward urged his sable steed.
 Descending to a little dell
 Where issued forth a flowing well,
 He mark'd a horseman's armour gleam,
 Whose dark bay charger drank the stream.
 Could he be friend—could he be foe ?
 But this would Edwin quickly know :
 The ventail¹ of his helm he clasp'd,
 His ready spear he firmly grasp'd ;
 With spur and snaffle roused his horse,
 And on, unswerving, held his course.

XVI.

The stranger up his bridle drew
 So soon as Edwin came in view,
 And held his tapering spear upright,
 Ready, on slightest cause, to fight,
 Then turn'd his charger to the way
 Where Edwin's journey northward lay.

¹ The breathing part of the helmet made to lift up.

Our mounted youth with prudence clear
Rode on, nor came the other near,
Who closer moved his powerful horse,
As if he wish'd to hold discourse.
At length, they spoke of men of might—
Of England's king and Wallace wight :
The patriot's part young Edwin took ;
His praise the other could not brook,
But call'd him murderer, traitor vile ;
When Edwin, all unmoved the while,
Set forth how Scotland was oppress'd,
How Wallace, of her sons the best,
Was bold and brave as man could be,
And strove to set his country free.
“ Hold, varlet ! hold,” the stranger said,
“ Saint George of England be my aid !
Upon this spot do I defy
Thy might, and tell thee thou dost lie :
This Wallace slew my brother dear ;
Defend thee now with sword or spear.”—

XVII.

They occupied an open green,
Where skirting trees around were seen,
And Edwin braced him to the strife
As war had been his joy of life :
His very steed appear'd to feel
Impatient for the shock of steel ;
A sparkling light was in his eye ;
He paw'd the ground and snorted high.
The other to a distance drew,
And coolly there in open view

Tighten'd his fastenings, seized his spear,
 Then onward rush'd in full career.
 Sternly they met ;—the stranger's dint
 On Edwin's side, like fire from flint,
 Glanced off, while on his helm a blow
 From Edwin nearly laid him low :
 Together still they rush amain ;
 In fiercest ire they strike, they strain ;
 Their spears at last in splinters fly.
 On foot the conflict now they try ;
 The stranger bends him on his knee ;
 Edwin the victor now we see :
 But lo !—who comes to hold the hand
 Wherein he grasps his conquering brand ?
 A man of venerable air,
 Whose open brow had lines of care ;
 And as he kindly sued for peace,
 His suppliant mien made Edwin cease.

XVIII.

The vanquish'd warrior rose again,
 And mounting, seem'd to suffer pain ;
 His unknown friend might Edwin guess
 To be a minstrel by his dress ;
 Green was the garment that he wore,
 Open the sides, but close before ;
 The cap upon his head was blue ;
 He had a sword and dagger too :
 Upon his palfrey sleek and young,
 A British harp suspended hung.
 In the brief words he spoke the while
 Mention was made of Alice Lisle ;

Of good Dame Heron whom he met,
When he on Edwin's track was set ;
And much he praised the genial part
She took in soothing Alice' heart.
" You know him not," he farther said,
" To whom I gave my humble aid :
His name is Selby—that same knight
Who call'd sweet Alice his delight ;
Nobly hath she refused his hand,
Careless of title or of land ;
And thus her sire in angry mood
Consigns the maid to solitude.
Be silent—more I yet could tell ;
We meet again—now fare you well."—

XIX.

Brave Edwin, joyful, smiled to find
The minstrel who was good and kind
To the fair maid of Chipchase tower,
Of all the north the sweetest flower ;
But he arranged to move away,
And Edwin, making no delay,
Mounted his steed and onward fared,
For sudden ambush all prepared.
On much he mused, and often thought
How opportunely chance had brought
Him of the harp amid the strife
When Selby near was reft of life ;
But how had wand'ring singer gain'd
Knowledge of what to him pertain'd,
Regarding her whose love alone
Excell'd in worth a monarch's throne ?

And then arose the hope, the joy,
That when to-morrow's sun was high,
He might again behold her face—
Inclasp her in a dear embrace—
List to the music of her tongue,
Soft as the notes by angels sung—
Perceive by every look and tone
Her throbbing breast was all his own,
And lavish on her unconfined
His utmost wealth of heart and mind,
Sharing of bliss the best that heaven
Of all its boons to man hath given.
Wansbeck he cross'd, when, sinking bright,
The sun threw back his golden light ;
Eastward by Rothley he did ride,
And reach'd the camp at eventide.

XX.

On to the east while it was day
Sir Haward Selby rode away ;
Through open waste and straggling wood,
He spurr'd his steed in sombre mood ;
His project base had been in vain—
He thought to have our Edwin slain,
And was annoy'd that in the strife
Himself had nearly lost his life.
Still more—when bending 'neath his foe,
Ere he received a deadly blow,
The harper came and sued for grace,
Who witness bore to his disgrace.
If chance—but no !—he would not think
To venture on perdition's brink

By slaying one whose gentle word
Had saved him from an outlaw's sword ;
Yet ere the fact was fully proved,
He deem'd 'twere well were he removed,
If by some hap a violent blow
In secret dealt might lay him low !
All this successive pass'd his mind ;
But up the minstrel came behind,
To whom with sly, dissembling breast,
His obligation he confess'd.
He of the harp, by modest pride,
Half-waived the compliment aside,
And spoke of battles won and lost,
Till moated Mitford's bridge they cross'd.

XXL

The castle's western turrets gray
Gleam'd in the light of dying day ;
Faint sigh'd at times the evening breeze ;
The leaves were falling from the trees ;
The moon increasing, fair and bright,
Shone lovely on the brow of night ;
And threw her cold but radiant beam
O'er Wansbeck's woods and flowing stream,
Which evermore the season long
Gave forth its wild and varied song.
Within old Mitford's spacious hall
Both knight and squire assembled all ;
Little they reck'd of nature's charms,
But joy'd to hear of war and arms :
Of these at length discoursed De Lisle,
And Selby oft replied the while,

Until the evening meal was shared ;
 Yet ere for slumber they repair'd,
 Deeming the laggard hours were long,
 They ask'd the minstrel for a song.
 Upon the harp his hand he laid,
 And with the tinkling strings he play'd ;
 At last in cadence free they rung,
 So listen to the words he sung :—

xxii.

Ballad.

SIR CONAN.

IN Wales Prince David's trumpet rang,
 When hundreds in their ire
 Bore down the hardy English knights,
 And set their homes on fire.

O'er hill and valley far and wide
 The welcome tidings flew,
 How Gilbert brave was captive ta'en,
 And Wilfred bold they slew.

Soon as the news Sir Conan heard,
 Who dwelt in southern land,
 He struck the trestle with his foot—
 The table with his hand.

“ Make ready now my dark brown steed,
 For I must northward go ;
 Did evil to Sir Gilbert come,
 Full heavy were my woe.”—

Out spoke the fair and lovely dame
Was seated by his side :—
“ ‘Tis but a week since we were wed ;
Why leave you thus your bride ?

“ Last night I had a dreary dream :
I thought we were at sea ;
Our ship went down while angry waves
Divided you and me.”—

“ Whenever duty calls, my love,
My onward course is clear ;
I told you how my life was saved
When hunting of the deer.

“ Upon a ledge of rock a stag
I struck, but miss’d my blow :
We struggled till it fell beneath
A shaft from Gilbert’s bow.”—

XXIII.

Ballad continued.

He kiss’d his young and gentle bride,
Who bade her knight “ good-speed ; ”
And all in shining steel array’d,
Once more he reins his steed.

A noble of the land he met :—
“ Sir Conan stay at home ;
The English force may gather here,
And wherefore northward roam ?

“ ‘Tis said you go to free a knight
 We took in battle-fray :
 It suits not that a son of Wales
 Her sacred cause betray.”—

“ Sir Prince, forbear to taunt me thus ;
 I love my country well ;
 But why I hasten on my way
 To thee I may not tell.

“ The hallow’d laws by knighthood framed
 Our order should obey ;
 And generous kindness once received
 ‘Tis meet that I repay.”—

Then pass’d he many a winding dale,
 And many a mountain high ;
 Dark Snowdon’s ridge he westward saw
 Piercing the clear blue sky.

Before he reach’d the massive keep
 Where Gilbert shackled lay,
 The flowers had folded up their leaves,
 The evening sky was gray.

xxiv.

Ballad continued.

“ Who comes to draw the heavy bolts
 That shut my lonely cell ?
 An’ if they drag me out to death,
 It may be quite as well.”—

“ Sir Gilbert, take you comfort now ;
I come to soothe your pain ;
And soon both light and liberty
Will be your own again.

“ Alas ! I heard with sorrow deep
How lost was Wilfred dear ;
O would that we his widow'd mate
And tender child might cheer !”—

The wondering captive's hands are free ;
He breathes the open air ;
Bright shone above his head the moon,
The earth was passing fair.

Next morning's mellow light beheld
Him mount a gallant steed,
And far beyond the Mersey's flood
He northward rode with speed.

Alas ! when England's standards broad
O'er Cambria flaunted gay,
Nor wife nor home Sir Conan had,
And far he sped away.

An exile from his rugged hills,
O'er France he wander'd lone,
To wail his hapless country's fate—
Her pride, her freedom gone.

XXV.

The singer ceased, when, with a smile
And kindly look, arose De Lisle ;
Of wine a goodly cup took he,
And bade the harper quaff it free ;
More he had said, but enter'd now
A warrior grave with troubled brow,
Who told them how a mighty force
Of Scottish infantry and horse
Led on by Wallace hither came,
Marking their path with smoke and flame ;
Near Rothley crags they pass'd the night,
And might advance by morning light.
The captain then, sedate and sage,
Unshaken, though advanced in age—
A scion of the Fenwicks¹ bold—
Who was intrusted with the hold,
Turn'd to De Lisle with kindling eye,
And said, “ We may them all defy ;
Still it is best to be prepared :
We mount to-night a double guard,
And every soldier, should he rest,
Must be in battle-armour dress'd.”—
The lingering evening now had fled,
And many guests to slumber sped :
Bask'd in the moonlight dale and hill,
And save the Wansbeck all was still.

¹ The Fenwicks are an ancient Northumbrian family.

EDWIN.

CANTO THE SECOND.

I.

THE cheering sun next morning shone
On Mitford's towering keep of stone ;
No foe appear'd throughout the night ;
The warders left as dawn'd the light ;
But others prompt their place supplied,
And scouts departed far and wide,
That they might all the movements know,
And mark the numbers of the foe.
Fenwick full well perform'd his part—
A soldier true in head and heart ;
'Neath Pembroke's earl he held command—
De Valence famed o'er sea and land,
Who with the king in France afar
A thousand followers led to war.
On Mitford's loftiest tower there flew
His flag of silver waved with blue ;
Before the rising breeze it spread
Showing the orle of martlets red.¹
The flanking walls were guarded well
From turret high to lowest cell ;

¹ The arms of Aymer De Valence, Earl of Pembroke, were, barry Argent and Azure an orle of martlets Gules.

And men were there resolved to stand
 'Gainst Scotland's forces hand to hand,
 In the defence of floor and hearth—
 The sacred spots where they had birth ;
 And not from myriads would they fly,
 But do their best, or nobly die.

II.

When higher rose the orb of day,
 Upon a broad and level way,
 That wound before the inner keep,
 Walk'd to and fro, in converse deep,
 Dark Selby sly and grave De Lisle,
 And thus the latter spoke the while :—
 “ These ruffian Scots while we have breath
 Must be resisted to the death :
 Ah ! how they hung upon our track,
 Yet thou didst try to keep them back
 Until thine aid our safety proved,
 As we from Stirling homeward moved.
 But, Selby, let us change our theme :—
 When I look back, 'tis like a dream
 To think on what that minstrel sung
 Last night, of days when I was young.
 Part was conceived, yet must I say
 A vein of truth ran through his lay :
 By Wilfred I friend Heron knew ;
 In Gilbert's name myself he drew ;
 Sir Conan served to let me know
 Howel of Wales—fair England's foe—
 Who by his grace our favour won ;
 He was Llewellyn's sister's son,

And, though opposed to us he stood,
We ever found him just and good.
But Grimesby join'd us, when we swore
We would to each for evermore
Be kind and faithful, nor deny
Our aid if for it we should die ;
He left, however, ere our foes—
Those savage Welsh—in arms arose,
And well do I recall the night
On which we met in deadliest fight.

III.

“ 'Twas on a Sunday eve when first
The ruthless wretches on us burst ;
By Rhudlan castle was our home,
Nor would we venture thence to roam :
In Heron's house did I reside ;
The gate they forced, which open'd wide,
And inward like devouring flame,
Shouting, with sword and axe, they came.
We fought, and for a time maintain'd
Our place, but no advantage gain'd ;
For countless numbers round us press'd,
And Heron fell among the rest.
His wife from out the havoc wild
Escaped, and led her female child ;
But as the foe her bower had won,
She could not reach her infant son.
A trusty steed my servant brought,
While I with desperate effort sought
Amid the fray the smiling boy,
And placed him on the saddle high ;

Springing behind through wounds and death,
Again I strove to hew my path :
It might not be—a heavy blow
Aim'd at my helmet laid me low :
I lost the boy, and senseless fell ;
What next occur'd I cannot tell ;
But woke within a narrow room
Whence day could scarce expel the gloom.

IV.

“ I know not now how long I lay,
But I grew better day by day :
Sweet spring awoke with joy the earth,
And summer came with all its mirth,
While I, a captive, pined to see
The daisies on the verdant lea.
To be debarr'd from sun and air
I felt was more than I could bear ;
O doubly welcome then was he,
The gentle knight that set me free,
And placed me on a gallant steed,
Which bore me off, unmatch'd in speed :
I, bending northward, found my way
To Chipchase on the second day.
May bounteous heaven unfailing shed
Its blessings on Sir Howel's head !
I gave him what I saved with care—
A ring my Edith loved to wear ;
And said how henceforth by that sign
He might command whate'er was mine :
Tender of heart, upright in mind,
He was an honour to his kind—

A genuine sample from the Hand
That made and guides both sea and land !

V.

“ Even thus it was Dame Heron mild
Lost both her husband and her child :
She mourn’d them long in bitter grief,
Till time, all soothing, brought relief.
But now, on mentioning Howel’s name,
Up to this hour am I to blame :
I have not ask’d the bard if he
Could tell me of his history ;
This I must do without delay.”—
Here Clement Forster cross’d the way—
Squire to De Lisle—who quickly told
That when the morn was bleak and cold
The minstrel pass’d the gate alone ;
It seem’d that southward he had gone.—
“ Perhaps he dreads,” observed the knight,
“ To meet the furious Scots in fight :
It matters little—let him go.
Now come, my friend, and to me show
How you engaged that youth last night—
Tell me the bearing of the fight :
I know this Edwin passing well—
A wicked knave he is, and fell ;
He stood you bravely, I suppose,
When, front to front, you came to blows ?”—

VI.

Now Fenwick, gazing round the place,
Came up and tarried for a space,

When Selby all his course reveal'd,
 How, when he came by wood and field,
 With Clement and a squire beside,
 They saw this Edwin onward ride
 As of Dame Heron he had care,
 Or vow'd to be her champion rare.
 Soon as the outlaw came in view,
 Clement at once his figure knew ;
 And he himself had given him chase,
 Save for the matron's kindly face ;
 But, lingering slowly on his track,
 He deem'd the rover would come back ;
 Nor long he stay'd, and what befell
 It was our part before to tell.
 Yet, varying, Selby still would say
 That nearly equal was the fray ;
 And while their utmost skill was tried,
 The minstrel turn'd their swords aside,
 Who strangely seem'd the youth to know,
 Deeming him rather friend than foe.—
 “O had you kill'd him,” said De Lisle,
 “My thanks sincere were yours the while !
 I hate him as the fiend of hell !
 Come, captain, come ! you know him well ;—
 At Otterburne, within the tower,
 He for a time was in your power
 Before in keep confined by me ;
 What may your judgment of him be ?”—

VII.

“Sir Ingram, what you say is true ;
 The stripling Edwin well I knew ;

Ready his hand and free his tongue ;
 Unknown the parents whence he sprung,
 Although 'twas said by Ostrede good,
 He had for grandsire Robin Hood :
 Some traveller wandering to the north
 From midst of England led him forth—
 Brought him to Elsden, left him there
 Under the prudent Rector's care :
 A kind but wayward boy he proved,
 And was by Ostrede much beloved,
 Who taught him how to write, and more,
 Show'd him of church and Saxon lore.
 Fair were the scrolls his hand could trace ;
 Nor was there sage around the place,
 Who heard him read the storied lays
 Of elder bards, but gave him praise.
 As up to manhood's date he grew
 A strong and trusty bow he drew,
 And 'midst the mirth of Elsden fair—
 For Redesdale archers gather'd there,
 That each his shooting skill might try
 Where flow'd the limpid streamlet by¹—
 The youthful Edwin by the rest
 Was said to wing his shaft the best.

VIII.

“ When Ostrede died, the bell's deep tone
 Proclaim'd that Edwin's friend was gone—

¹ A small hillock or mound close by Elsden burn, at the base of the Mote-hills, formed the butt for the young men who strove to excel in archery.

The best, the kindest e'er he met,
 Nor did he soon the loss forget ;
 But youth is buoyant, loving change,
 And through the district would he range ;
 In every hope¹ and wildwood near
 He knew to track the forest deer ;
 Then by a shaft in secret thrown,
 He deftly brought the swiftest down.
 Rumour of this like lightning flew,
 Till Angus' earl² the matter knew,
 Who order gave that I should take
 The youth in charge for Ostrede's sake,
 And, would he not conduct him well,
 Secure him in the lowest cell :
 Prevail'd against him still the tale,
 And he was driven from out the dale.
 True, he was like a colt untamed,
 And by us all for wildness blamed,
 Yet I perceived a lingering trace
 Of something genial in his face—
 A sign that, through his acts of ill,
 Bespoke of goodness in him still.
 Such the impression I received,
 But partly may have been deceived :
 He wrong'd me not as he did you,
 Else I had borne him hatred too.”—

IX.

Here Fenwick's duties called him hence,
 Each point preparing for defence :

¹ *Hope*, the name in Redesdale for a valley.

² Gilbert De Umfreville, first Earl of Angus.

Still, on the circling gravelly walk,
De Lisle continued thus to talk :—
“ This youth, since first his face I spied,
A thorn he has been in my side :
The salmon in my streams he spear’d ;
My woods of choicest stags he clear’d.
To check his course I interposed,
And once, when Clement with him closed,
So hot and fierce became the strife,
He almost reft the squire of life.
At last I made him dwell alone
In my own rugged fort of stone.
Not many weeks the culprit lay ;
For when the moon shone bright as day,
Sudden he ’scaped, and, as the wind,
Left donjon, wall, and bar behind.
Now, Selby, I were loth to breathe
Aught that would tend to blight the wreath
Of concord ’twixt my girl and you ;
But, judging thence, and speaking true,
I often think he caught a smile
Or thrilling look from Alice Lisle,
And that a kindly hand she lent
To free him from imprisonment.

x.

“ Well, since the time he took to flight,
The outcast never cross’d my sight
Again, until, ’midst death and blood,
At Stirling’s fatal bridge we stood :
I mark’d my noble boy, who bore
Him gallantly his troop before,

Singled from out our chosen band,
And falling 'neath the miscreant's hand,
Whom I observed in armour dress'd—
I knew him well among the rest—
And had through all the havoc wild
Rush'd onward and avenged my child ;
But Wallace on my pathway came,
Like lion roused, with eye of flame."—
Not farther could De Lisle proceed,
For now a yeoman rode his steed
Up to the inner court, and there
Told all who heard him to prepare.
Thus ran the tenor of his tale :—
Where wimpling Font flows down the dale,
A score of Scots had dared to ride,
Who would be soon at Wansbeck side.
Then quickly spur was bound on heel,
And men came forth array'd in steel :
Rough bosoms there were beating high,
And brightly glow'd each warrior's eye—
Men who regarded war and strife
Inspiring as the breath of life.

XI.

The Scots to Morpeth kept the way,
Till they could Wansbeck vale survey ;
Scarce had they look'd on scene more sweet,
Where wood and water mingling meet :
The town stood eastward from the stream,
Which glitter'd in the morning beam ;
The castle, on the southern height,
Rose high, with tower, and turret bright.

Beyond the Wansbeck, close at hand,
They mark'd Newminster lovely stand,
Bounded with banks on every side,
All fresh and radiant as a bride ;
Nor all by Wansbeck's margin rare
Is there a spot so soft and fair.
The warriors up their bridles drew,
And gazed at all within their view ;
Then, swerving down, they cross the tide,
And quickly reach the southern side.
No waste or spoil do they intend,
But past the abbey forth they wend ;
Nor movement saw they in the place,
Nor helm, nor shield, nor foeman's face ;
Yet holy brethren they could spy
Who gazed upon them passing by ;
And voices join'd in sacred song
That rose the echoing aisles among,
Woman and child, and maiden fair,
Alarm'd, had fled for refuge there ;
Yet all conceal'd behind they lay
Until the danger pass'd away.

XII.

Ascending upward, soon the foe
O'er sloping bank and bramble go ;
But now direct before their eyes
The walls of Mitford fort arise,
Massive and bold, with flanking towers,
That erst had baffled Scotland's powers.
The scouring horsemen mark'd it well ;
But on the instant, what befell ?

Scarce had they gain'd the level green
On which the lowly church is seen,
When from the castle gate behind
Full thirty spears came like the wind ;
The Scots around their horses wheel,
And dauntless meet the charge of steel.
De Lisle bore down the first he met,
His favourite squire on Grimesby set,
Then fought the Fenwick fierce as fire,
And Selby dealt his blows with ire ;
The English hem their foes around ;
Yet man and horse go to the ground ;
In deadliest struggle dints are given ;
Helmets are cleft and armour riven.
But who of all the Scots is he
That plies his sword so furiously ?
Whoever meets him hand to hand,
Sinks prone beneath that powerful brand !

XIII.

Of all the patriots Scotland nursed
That hero was and is the first—
Sir William Wallace 'twas, whose name
Is highest in his country's fame ;
So by his prowess soon the tide
Of victory was on his side.
Horses and men the greensward strew :
De Lisle, with followers still a few,
Fell back and gain'd secure the hold,
But not the fiery Fenwick bold ;
Close by his charger's side he lay,
And, gasping, breathed his life away.

A clump of stately trees was by,
Thither in haste did Selby fly :
Clement lay still, of life bereft,
Whose skull a battle-axe had cleft :
From 'midst the dead, the victors then
Selected two—their wounded men ;
Again on horseback placed them fair—
Supplied their wants with utmost care.
Now Grimesby with uncover'd head,
In solemn accents bless'd the dead ;
And briny tears descending proved
How the departed were beloved.

XIV.

Up Wansbeck still would Wallace ride,
With faithful Grimesby for his guide ;
In front and also in the rear
The other mounted men were near ;
But what of him who led the band—
The champion of his native land ;
How seem'd he in his saddle set,
Or when with other knights he met ?
Broad were his shoulders, deep his chest ;
A head he was above the rest ;
His arms were powerful, round, and long,
The limbs proportion'd well and strong ;
Erect and stately he appear'd,
Curly and brown his hair and beard ;
The brows were of a lighter hue,
The watchful eyes a grayish blue,
That carried in their glance a light,
Or as the diamond sparkled bright :

His thoughtful forehead broad and high,
The nose was set in symmetry ;
His face was rather long than round ;
Firm were the lips, the teeth were sound ;
A healthy red was on his cheek,
And free and mildly would he speak ;
But when aroused by battle-cry,
Burn'd with courageous fire his eye ;
A change came o'er his visage fair,
And high resolve was pictured there ;
Even Mars himself amid the fight
Had seem'd a squire to that brave knight.

XV.

Not long they kept the stream in sight,
But, bending north, they cross'd the height,
And dived again the woods among,
Where Font, meandering, chimes its song ;
Then Wallace, reining in his horse,
Held with dark Grimesby close discourse.
But lo ! what meets the horsemen's eye ?
Beneath a tree, on passing by,
The body of a peasant lay
As he were kill'd in battle-fray ;
Behind it, likewise, reft of life,
Lay one who seem'd to be his wife ;
But sunken was her pallid cheek,
For hunger and exhaustion weak
Had prey'd upon her till she died ;
While closely nestled by her side,
A tender infant, cold as clay,
All thinly cover'd, lifeless lay.

Near these they mark'd another child
Whose lips were smear'd with berries wild--
A male it was with features bold,
Who perish'd there from want and cold.
While round the dead the warriors crowd,
A dog rose up and growl'd aloud ;
The faithful beast had hither borne
A rabbit, whence the skin was torn,
Of which the children might partake ;
And watch'd them till they should awake.

XVI.

On to the north the party ride,
While Wallace, by the churchman's side,
Commented on the heavy woe
That hapless countries undergo,
When kings, exulting in their might,
Make wrong appear as it were right.
" 'Tis true, Sir William," Grimesby said,
" O would that war and strife were stay'd !
Of what I witness even a part
Must strike with grief the stoutest heart,
Though custom make us feel the less
For human suffering and distress.
Alas ! my chief, years glide away
To blunt our sense, and make us gray !
The feeling keen I have not now
That thrill'd my soul or flush'd my brow,
When, long ago, in summer tide,
It was my purpose here to ride.
Thomas the Rhymer—only he
On horseback gave me company,

Besides our Edwin, then a child,
Who wept at times, but often smiled ;
Upon the saddle-bow he play'd,
And to us much amusement made :
Of this brave youth I spoke before ;
His story now I'll tell you o'er.

xvii.

“ Heroic deeds the Rhymer loved,
And, when I knew him, he was moved
With me to traverse England fair,
And mark her valleys rich and rare.
But, more than all, he careful sought
Those scenes that to remembrance brought
The wise, the good, the fearless brave—
Where they had lived or found a grave.
Thus when we o'er the land had gone,
We came to Sherwood forest lone,
That Robin Hood made classic ground,
And there we youthful Edwin found.
The Rhymer stalk'd through brake and lea,
By wooded cave and ancient tree,
By fountain pure and brooklet sheen,
Where the bold hunter oft had been :
Then we enquired of shepherd boy—
Of peasant and of damsel coy,
Where we might the descendants find
Of him who wander'd like the wind—
Who robb'd the rich that he might live,
And to the poor would succour give.
We were directed to a dell,
In which a widow lone did dwell :

She was, they said, the leader's child,
And dear she loved the woodlands wild ;
Low was her cot, and sick was she :
The boy was standing at her knee ;
A lively, roguish imp he seem'd,
And while his eyes upon us beam'd,
No doubt the Rhymer had, his face
Told he was of the chieftan's race.

XVIII.

“ During the time we linger'd there,
Gazing throughout the forest fair,
The woman sank nor rallied more ;
And when her days were nearly o'er,
Seeing that we an interest took
In her, she ask'd if we would look
Towards the welfare of the boy
Amid a heartless world's annoy.
No stay was left her, for his sire
She saw on battle-field expire,
When Wales her forces dared to bring
In fatal conflict with the king.
The Rhymer to the mother made
A promise he her son would aid,
Which when she heard, she careful sought
An amulet most richly wrought
Of emerald pure, without a speck,
And hung it round her darling's neck ;
Then all resign'd, with grateful sigh,
She meekly laid her down to die.
This sapling, from the hero sprung,
To us, his guardians, closely clung ;

Off to the north the boy we brought,
Nor long a covert for him sought :
Good Ostrede, who at Elsden dwelt,
Compassion for the orphan felt,
And gave him clothing warm and food
Solely for sake of Robin Hood.

XIX.

“ Direct to Scotland then we went ;
And though it oft was our intent
To visit Redesdale, that we might
Of the young stripling have a sight,
The Rhymer was engaged afar,
And I was call’d to feud and war ;
Yet it befell, ere Ostrede died,
That, riding o’er the Border side,
I call’d at Elsden and was shown
Our orphan, who a youth had grown.
Hence, passing on from place to place,
Of him again I lost the trace
Till in our columns he was set
As we the foe at Stirling met,
Where against numbers he achieved
Such deeds as scarce can be believed ;
And strange to say, through good or ill,
The stone of worth, he keeps it still !”—
“ Enough, my Grimesby,” Wallace said,
“ The youthful hero we must aid ;
Descending down his grandsire’s line,
Whose life in part resembled mine
By striving ’gainst tyrannic sway,
We’ll raise him on an early day,

In the ascending scale of fame,
To honour that his merits claim."—

XX.

From this and what he knew before,
Our Wallace valued Edwin more,
Who being gentle, brave, and true,
Higher in favour daily grew :
Grimesby no less the stripling loved ;
Whate'er he did it was approved.
But now full near the camp they drew,
And soon its numerous tents they view ;
Two poppling burns beneath it met ;
On rising ground 'twas pitched and set :
The place was ample in extent,
Where grew together heath and bent ;
But free of furze and dry the ground,
While clumps of copsewood rose around ;
Gush'd near the streams a fountain free,
Where grew a lofty, spreading tree.
Hundreds of tents in lines were rear'd ;
All low and narrow they appear'd ;
But in the centre were a few
Of large proportions, white and new :
Before them, fann'd by western air,
Unnumber'd pennons flaunted fair ;
And 'mid the whole, the banners bright,
Of Murray¹ waved and Wallace wight.

¹ The youthful and patriotic Sir Andrew Murray of Bothwell, whose father was killed in the battle of Stirling, commanded with Wallace the Scottish army on this expedition to England. His arms were, Azure, three mullets Argent. The arms of Wallace were, Gules, a lion rampant Argent, within a bordure golonated of the last and Azure.

In lines again, the tents between,
Numbers of blazing fires were seen,
Where beef new-killed in hides was boil'd,
Or on the quickening embers broil'd,
While far was heard, confused, the noise
Of busy women, men, and boys.

XXI.

Entering the camp, a flourish proud
Of horns resounded long and loud—
A token which the army gave
Of welcome to their leader brave ;
Full many horses neigh'd around,
And several echoed back the sound.
But lo ! a crowd—what can it be ?
Down at the well beside the tree.
A captive there defiant stands ;
With knotted cord are bound his hands :
Some horsemen brought him as a spy,
And said that quickly he must die :
Around him he survey'd the scene,
Yet nothing daunted was his mien ;
He only stood and pray'd for grace
Till he should look on Grimesby's face,
Or whisper, since his end was near,
One little secret in his ear.
When to the churchman this was told,
Direct he came with Wallace bold—
Gazed at the man, but nought could see
That brought him to his memory :
Few words at last accomplish'd more ;
Grimesby had known him long before.

'Twas he our minstrel, whom that morn
His steed from Mitford towers had borne ;
His captors in the forest's shade
The travelling bard a prisoner made.

XXII.

Where now was Edwin ? Had he been
Within the camp, and Owen seen,
The youth possess'd authority
At once to set the harper free.
But this reminds us for a space,
The course we travel to retrace—
To tell how, at the dawn of day,
Dame Heron westward rode away,
From Swinburne on to Chipchase tower,
To meet with Tindale's¹ fairest flower.
Her servant, Ernest, rode behind ;
Through waste and copse and burn they wind ;
At last, ascending to a height,
Old Chipchase' turrets gleam'd in sight ;
Approaching nearer, soon they found
That they were now on haunted ground ;
A gate, untouch'd, flew open wide,
And closed when inward they did ride.
The Dame dismounted at the door,
And when they trod the castle floor,
Of joyful mirth they heard the sound,
And sweetest music rose around ;
Amid them oft it seem'd to be,
Yet nothing present could they see ;

¹ In spelling *Tindale*, *Redesdale*, and *Elden*, I have adhered to the mode adopted by Hodgson, the historian of *Northumberland*.

Nor shade of fear upon them fell ;
 They knew of Glisker's welcome well,
 And were aware his tuneful tongue
 This artless ditty wildly sung :—

XXIII.

Song.

O welcome to our Alice fair ;
 Up to her chamber go ;
 Relieve the maid of weary care,
 And chase away her woe.
 Sweet is her smile, her bosom true,
 Her shape and air divine ;
 A gem is she of brightest hue,
 This mistress rare of mine.

I care for neither heat nor cold,
 Man's voice or woman's tongue,
 Nor damsel strange, nor yeoman bold,
 Nor noble old or young ;
 For meat and drink are nought to me,
 Nor weather wet or fine ;
 But I shall serve with constancy
 This lovely maid of mine.

O had I been of flesh and blood
 Instead of changeful form,
 How I had sought to do her good
 And shield her safe from harm !
 For O the bliss by bank or stream
 Beside her to recline !

And tell of love's enchanting theme
This lady fair of mine.

In air, in water, or on land
I live like shadow free ;
Nor fay nor mortal may command,
Or lay a charge on me ;
But for the sake of Alice fair,
I'll flit by playful Tyne,
And, watchful, make her all my care,
This damsel dear of mine !

XXIV.

The matron from De Lisle had power,
In Chipchase fort at any hour,
To traverse every chamber lone,
From turret high to lowest stone ;
Hence, each attendant there of name
Gave prompt admittance to the Dame.
Up to the top alone she went,
Where gentle Alice close was pent ;
Kind was the greeting them between,
And question'd they how each had been.
The Dame related in the ear
Of Alice what she blush'd to hear,
And told her of the promise made
To meet beneath the wildwood shade.
Still deeper redder'd Alice' cheek ;
And when with freedom she could speak,
She question'd if 'twere right to go,
And see alone her country's foe ?

Besides she heard her father tell,
 'Neath Edwin's sword her brother fell :
 O no ! in safety she would wait—
 She must not rush upon her fate ;
 What if her sire should homeward ride,
 And find her by the outlaw's side !
 Then came a wild, entreating tone,
 As through a harp the wind had gone ;
 'Twas Glisker's cry which echoed slow :—
 " Dear Alice, now, prepare to go !"—

XXV.

Our Dame the doubtful damsel cheers ;
 She knew a tender maiden's fears—
 Tells her of Edwin, seeks to move
 Her bosom with the glow of love—
 Says that the outline of his face,
 His genial manner and his grace,
 The mellow music of his voice
 Recall'd the husband of her choice.
 Her point at last the matron gain'd ;
 Assent from Alice was obtain'd
 To change her simple dress, and more,
 To don the garb Dame Heron wore.
 When ready draped the damsel stood,
 The matron in her blithest mood
 Call'd up her page and gave command
 That he should walk at Alice' hand,
 When from the castle forth she fared,
 And be her faithful guide and guard.
 If Edwin chanced to take his place,
 The page would then retire a space

To mark if aught of danger came,
That he might tell them of the same.
Full loud did Glisker laugh with joy
As Alice vanish'd with the boy ;
The porter, as they went away,
Deem'd her the Dame, but thought her gay
And light of foot as on she pass'd,
For not a look behind she cast :
Two deer-hounds bounded by their side,
And gamboll'd round them far and wide.

XXVI.

The Dame to Dora then withdrew,
Who sat and span, but nothing knew
Of where her venturous niece had gone,
And thus she spoke in kindly tone :—
“ Welcome to Chipchase ! Come, sit down ;
How slowly have the moments flown
With us since last you linger'd here,
And pass'd the time with Alice dear.
Now tarry with us for a space ;
I know not what o'erhangs this place ;
But Glisker's tricks and bellowings strange
Betoken here some sudden change :
I fear not much what may befall,
Knowing that God is over all ;
And should it happen good or ill,
'Tis ours to be obedient still.
Two months o'er me have nearly gone
Since, living in this tower of stone,
I've heard of trials you have borne,
And how your loving breast was torn :

Besides you told me of the pain
You suffer'd when your lord was slain ;
But of your after life I ne'er
Could from your lips the story hear :
Still more—a witness you have been
Of what on earth are seldom seen—
Those guardian spirits, bright and rare,
That o'er us exercise their care.
I cannot urge you to reveal
The secret things you would conceal ;
Yet by your kindness please to show
Whate'er of Alice' youth you know."—

xxvii.

" If I would, Dora, now recall
My former woes, and tell you all,
It were indeed a saddening tale,
Yet nothing would the whole avail.
Near Rhudlan fort, when dismal night
Departed, and as dawn'd the light,
A shallow boat mid ocean's wave
Myself—my infant child did save ;
We gain'd the Mersey's northern strand,
And reach'd our own Northumberland.
Here friends on every side I met,
Whose kindness I can ne'er forget ;
By high, by low, I was caress'd—
In hall or bower a welcome guest.
When circling years oblivious sped,
Your sister's gentle spirit fled ;
Her son within the fortress fair
Grew up beneath a father's care ;

But Alice, motherless, alone
I loved and cherish'd as my own.
Ellen and she—two rosebuds blent—
Were with me wheresoe'er I went ;
They form'd, indeed, my world of bliss—
A source of earthly happiness—
Until my girl forsook me here
To blossom in another sphere ;
Then, though of kindred all bereft,
Kind Alice still to me was left.

XXVIII.

“ The shipwreck'd sailor holding fast
Upon the deep some broken mast,
Will seek assistance from on High
While onward driven by sea and sky :
Even so did I in earnest prayer,
And found relief from sorrow there ;
The more we seek of gracious heaven,
The more to human ken is given.
Alice and I—we loved to roam,
For change of scene, away from home—
To Otterburne a visit paid,
And near the tower my little maid
Would gather flowerets fair, and look,
Watching the minnows in the brook :
Thus on a brilliant afternoon,
Towards the end of lovely June,
We both were seated by the well,
When slumber on her eyelids fell,
And then I ask'd my eyes might see
Those angels in their purity .

That over all of Adam's race
Watch on and ever hold their place.
Clear as we mark in middle air
The arch'd rainbow bright and fair,
And close to Alice hovering near,
I saw transparent forms appear !
Beings they were of fairest mould,
With purple wings and hair of gold ;
Their faces of celestial hue,
The robes they wore of lightest blue ;
In heavenly regions had they birth,
And lovelier far than aught of earth ;
Over the sleeping child they hung,
And kiss'd her cheek and round her clung :
Long, long they linger'd in my sight,
Then vanish'd like a beam of light ;
The well was there—the child alone ;
But guardian spirit saw I none."

EDWIN.

CANTO THE THIRD.

I.

O who the truth will frankly tell
But must of love remember well,
How, when he was no longer boy,
And life had gleams of brightest joy,
Some blushing maid his fancy drew,
Upon whose tempting lip the dew
Was purer than the drop that glows
Folded within the opening rose ;
Her breath like incense of the morn
O'er moors of blooming heather borne ;
Her eyes, as heaven's own blessed light,
Creating day—dispelling night !

• No single feature of her face
But told of sweetness or of grace ;
And then her goodly, rounded form,
With life and all its motion warm,
Fair as was Eve's, in eastern land,
Forth issuing from her Maker's hand,
Where every waving bend and line
Bespoke an architect divine ;
And lovelier still—her gentle mind
With our best hopes and thoughts entwined :

Then he the full amount may guess
Of Edwin's perfect happiness,
Who gain'd of love the winning smile
And peerless glance of Alice Lisle.

II.

The morning air was cold and damp,
When Edwin, mounting, left the camp :
South-west the Wansbeck stream he cross'd,
And high in bosky woods was lost ;
But soon the day more brightly shone,
And stretch'd before him moorlands lone,
Which upward heaved in rounded swell,
And then in undulations fell ;
Yet every height and glen around
Were all to him familiar ground ;
And when he northward turn'd his eye,
The dark brown uplands he could spy,
Where he had roam'd in youthful glee
Like lightsome roe, with foot as free.
These were the same as when at first
Upon his eager view they burst ;
But o'er himself—he thought it strange—
Had gently come a withering change.
Apart from all he hoped to share
In virtuous love with Alice fair,
A shade of sorrow darkening crept
Upon him till he almost wept,
When dawn'd upon his mind the truth,
How fled the visions of his youth !
Impulses high he knew before
Brighten'd his waking dreams no more,

And sad he felt in manhood's strife
To waste the poetry of life !

III.

To mourn o'er this he saw 'twas vain;
So gave his steed a looser rein,
And pressing forward, made him feel
The vigour of his rowell'd heel.
Tindale at length before him lay,
And then he cross'd the Roman way,
Whose line his eye distinctly traced,
Leading o'er hill and glen and waste,
Where legions from a lovely clime,
Seen darkly through the mist of time
By fancy's eye, in days of yore
Their spears and eagles onward bore.
Threading his way by bank or shade
Where straggling trees a covert made,
Edwin his breath more quickly drew
When Chipchase turrets rose in view :
Dismounting now, he strove to trace,
At the Deer oak, the lonesome place,
More prized than all the earth beside,
Where he would meet—perhaps his bride :
What joy, if Alice Lisle were near,
Whose face to see, whose voice to hear,
And whose fair form to clasp again
Would recompense an age of pain !

IV.

Not long he sought :—Within the wood,
He saw fair Alice where she stood

Radiant as morn when time was new,
Nor boy nor dogs were in his view :
Before a minute scarce could glide
The youth was by the maiden's side !
Often as joy surpasses fear,
A smile will mingle with a tear—
Even so through rapture, pure and high,
The moisture stood in Edwin's eye ;
Alter'd the hue on Alice' cheek ;
She kindly gazed, but scarce could speak
From feelings in her bosom pent,
Till space allow'd them gradual vent.
Then gentle words between them pass'd ;
Breathings were deep and sighs came fast,
Revealing how the heart may be
O'ercharged with love's felicity :
Hand lock'd in hand, aside they drew,
Conversing, to a bower in view
That rose within the coppice round,
Where Edwin's charger cropt the ground.
Ah ! never in these shades of green
•Were such a youth and damsel seen !
Doff'd was his casque and brown his hair,
Stately his form, and mild his air :
Slender was she and bright her hue,
Her locks were fair, her eyes were blue :
O kindliest of creation yet—
Dear woman's love who can forget ?

v.

Two hours in close discourse had fled,
When Edwin to her softly said :—

“ O Alice, thus again to meet—
The spot how blest—the hour how sweet !
Varied has been my lot through life,
Now buoy’d with hope, now roused to strife ;
But since these kindly eyes of thine
With modest glance encounter’d mine,
Thou hast to me been as the star
Of safety to the mariner !
Tempests may come, wild waves may rise,
Flinging their white foam to the skies ;
A troubled sea may boil beneath,
And only ’twixt myself and death
A slender plank be interposed ;
Yet though by danger thus enclosed,
I’ll struggle on till all subside,
If thou art shining o’er the tide.
O, since I left thee, oft in pain
I long’d to see thy face again ;
For I have been with warriors rude
While they in midst of battle stood,
And felt the thrill of wild delight
With which we closed in furious fight.
• Yet when our vengeful work was done—
The victory gain’d—the honour won—
Emotions soft my heart would sway ;
I thought of Alice far away,
And pray’d she might be kept from ill—
Sole empress of my bosom still !

VI.

“ But time, my dearest, wings its flight ;
The lengthening shadows point to night ;

Wallace with all his force is near,
Yet nothing dread while I am here :
Each Scottish sword is on my side
And would defend me or my bride.
As deer in forest I am free
To go where'er it listeth me :
So let us choose a pathway new
Which we may steadily pursue ;
And as we talk, be mine the while
To catch the sweetness of thy smile,
And mark the winning glance that flies
From out the depth of those bright eyes.
O thou art silent, loveliest maid ;
Can I thy views, thy purpose aid ?
Speak but the word and I obey,
But do not from me turn away."—
Some moments sped—her eyes she raised,
And on his features calmly gazed :—
" Had I," she said, " to ask a boon
Of thee, thou would'st award it soon,
Else in affection changed thou art
Since thou didst proffer me thine heart.
Dark lowering clouds are on the wind,
And gloom and storm approach behind ;
Canst thou devise no shelter nigh,
Until the whirlwind pass us by ?
How sad, those hours when lovers meet
Should pass away on wings so fleet ;
For this warm flood of sunshine bright
Must soon be swallow'd up in night !"—

VII.

“ Life hath, my love,” the youth replied,
“ All joy when thou art by my side ;
Like summer art thou to my sight—
More soft thy breath, thy look more bright :
If absent, slowly move the hours—
A wintry sky above me lowers ;
Then let us seize the time and prove
The perfect happiness of love.
I know the Tyne is dear to thee,
So is the vale of Rede to me ;
But straight from either must we fly,
Or thou art ta’en and I must die.
Say, would’st thou with me thread the way
To Scotland’s mountains dark and gray ?
The hind runs swift in Teviotdale,
The dun deer bounds o’er Ettrick vale ;
Beyond the Forth the hills are high,
The glens are low that ’mid them lie ;
But shelt’ring woods and furze are there,
And rivers broad, and balmy air :
Though lowly, Alice, be our lot,
We will erect a little cot
Where I shall tend thee as a flower
Blooming within some sylvan bower,
And we would share delight more true
Than wealthy monarch ever knew.”—

VIII.

“ Edwin, thou hast been kind to me,
And I may well be proud of thee ;

Though harsh my father with thee dealt,
 Still more and more thy worth I felt :
 Love's spark at length to flame increased,
 So that the passion fill'd my breast.
 I saw thou wert despised and poor,
 Yet every ill thou didst endure
 Bravely and well, nor signal gave
 Of aught to indicate the slave :
 I caught the fervour of thy mind,
 And now, to watchful heaven resign'd,
 My fortune with thee I will take,
 Come good or evil, for thy sake !
 Among the wilds of Scotland we
 Will joyful live as bird on tree :
 From out the fare that we have stored
 My hand shall trim thy frugal board ;
 The limpid liquid from the spring
 To set before thee will I bring :
 At morn on thee I'll duly wait ;
 At eve I'll meet thee at the gate,
 And it shall be my highest pride
 As now to seat me by thy side—
 To tend thy wish, to list thy song,
 Nor deem the wintry evening long.”—

IX.

Edwin exclaim'd, “ I bless thee, heaven—
 Thou hast to me a treasure given !
 More I'll not ask—I am content—
 A richer thou could'st not have sent :
 Joy like to this is worth a life
 Of perils multiplied and strife :

The trials I have borne—the thrall—
 This minute's space o'erpays them all.
 Alice, thou art like angel bright
 Sent hitherward to walk in light—
 To cheer me onward day by day,
 And scatter blessings o'er my way :
 I vow that next to God above,
 Thee will I ever prize and love ;
 For in the glance of those bright eyes,
 Earth is to me like paradise ;
 And I can scarce my heart repress,
 It is so fill'd with happiness !”—
 He spoke no more, because a cry
 Of coming danger echoed high—
 'Twas Glisker's wild, unearthly yell,
 That by the sound its tale did tell.
 One arm round Alice quick was clasp'd,
 The other hand his broadsword grasp'd :
 He look'd around—his steed was by
 With arch'd neck and startled eye ;
 The noise of horsemen met his ear ;
 Capture or death was doubtless near.

X.

Three steps he moved not whence he stood
 Until he saw within the wood
 Approaching lances gather round ;
 His charger caught he at a bound—
 Upon the saddle raised the maid,
 And sprang behind her, with his blade
 Full firmly grasp'd to cut his way
 Through where the likeliest opening lay.

The pennon of De Lisle on high
 Amid the rest he could descry ;
 The foremost foe to earth he dash'd,
 The next with furious stroke he gash'd ;
 Spear heads he lopp'd like ears of corn,
 And through the press was almost borne
 With Alice safe and free of harm,
 When from a steady archer's arm
 An arrow came, like lightning fleet,
 And laid his charger at his feet.
 Still bravely he the fight maintain'd,
 Although his foes upon him gain'd :
 Fair Alice from his side they drew,
 And strove to pierce his armour through :
 Like lion in the toils he rears,
 Yet falls at last below the spears ;
 They raise him up, his helm unclasp,
 Withdraw the weapon from his grasp ;
 Thus, bleeding, faint, and in their power,
 Down is he led to Chipchase tower.

xi.

Behind with Selby rode De Lisle,
 And fiendish joy was in his smile,
 When, through the guarded castle gate,
 Edwin was borne his doom to wait :
 Alice before had homeward gone,
 And, entering, climb'd her turret lone ;
 Yet was her bearing firm and high,
 Though flush'd her cheek and moist her eye :
 Her native energy arose
 As round her gather'd ills or woes ;

And she who scarce before could brook
A father's angry word or look,
Now stood prepared to suffer all
That by his wrath might on her fall.
A glance De Lisle to Selby gave,
Who 'mid excitement now was grave ;
For though o'erjoy'd as man could be
At capture of his enemy,
Within him raged a conflict keen
Affection and his pride between,
To know a humble rival gain
The valued prize he sought in vain.
And yet his thoughts he well conceal'd,
Nor aught to Chipchase' lord reveal'd,
Whose lofty look was that of one
Proud of the conquest he had won.
When evening came, a wailing sound
Floated the lonely fortress round,
Like to the storm, so wild and drear,
That howls the requiem of the year ;
'T was heard by all without affright,
Nor ceased it through the lingering night.

XII.

O where had gone the careless boy
Whose sad neglect wrought such annoy—
He who went out with Alice dear
To see no danger came her near ?
Up to the oak as they did wind,
She bade him stay a space behind,
Nor venture near the ancient tree,
But range around the forest free ;

Ripe nuts he gather'd, and each hound
In playful circles scour'd the ground.
Meantime De Lisle, when he was sure
That Mitford Castle stood secure,
And heated by the desperate strife
Whence he had merely 'scaped with life,
Resolved at once, whate'er should come,
To journey with his followers home :
Meldon he pass'd and Bolam high ;
The Poind and Man¹ engaged his eye ;
He left Capheaton to the right,
Then woody Tindale met his sight ;
Beneath him Swinburne's groves were still,
And then he compass'd lone Camp-hill.—
But now the dogs 'neath Ernest's care
Had roused a stag from out its lair ;
And following on with reckless speed,
He left his charge when most in need ;
Then, hastening back, he saw the fray,
And, struck with sorrow, sped away.

¹ "The Poind and his Man," observes HODGSON, our great county historian, who supplies a woodcut of them, "are the most remarkable group of antiquities I know of in Northumberland." They consist of a barrow, and near to it a weather-furrowed stone 6½ feet high and 5 feet square. They are situated on a dry and elevated ridge on the north side of Harnham moor, near to Bolam West Houses, and in the south-east angle of the crossings of Cob's causeway and the Scotch street. The tumulus was opened by Warburton about the commencement of 1718, and at about a yard in depth a stone coffin was found with glutinous matter in it, but no bones. HODGSON says that though the "kistvaen near the top of the barrow be removed, it is probable the ashes of the chieftain, first inhumed here, are still undisturbed." Last year (1864), in company with my friend, Mr. Thomas Arkle, agent to the Right Hon. Lord Decies, who is proprietor of the place, I visited these remains, and was much interested by their appearance.

XIII.

Eastward he ran in utmost haste,
And, bounding on across the waste,
He mark'd a stranger lead a horse,
And fast they came upon his course ;
As nearer still to each they drew,
His own good palfrey well he knew ;
But he who led him, strange to say,
Vanish'd like morning mist away.
Suspecting Glisker gave him aid,
The dauntless youth was not afraid ;
But mounting straight, and hurrying on,
He cross'd the burn near Whelpington ;
Elf Hills and Rothley both he pass'd ;
The Scottish camp he reach'd at last :
A guard admittance to him gave,
And he was led where Wallace brave,
With Murray young and Grimesby aged,
In consultation were engaged.
Our Ernest well the latter knew,
So told his tale and then withdrew :
A cup of ale was to him borne ;
They gave his active pony corn ;
Next led him on 'mid arms and men,
Until he clear'd the camp, and then
From all restraint once more relieved,
On looking back the youth believed,
By what had met his eager sight,
The Scots would move at morning light.
His willing horse he gave the rein,
And homeward swept o'er hill and plain ;

Gain'd by the dusk Sir Ingram's hold,
And to the Dame his story told.

XIV.

Wide o'er the vale of northern Tyne,
The rising sun did brightly shine ;
Each lofty tree and heathy height
Caught first of all his golden light ;
Then as he rose the dales below,
Where birches wild and alders grow,
By wimpling brooks and flowing streams,
Laugh'd in the splendour of his beams ;
But morning brought to Alice Lisle
No genial joy, no placid smile.
She told Dame Heron all her grief,
Nor knew she where to find relief ;
Yet there was firmness in her tone,
And courage, though she stood alone.
The Dame in silence mused awhile,
Then sought the presence of De Lisle,
And ask'd if mercy would but flow
To the poor youth—his captive foe ?
“ No, never,” was his prompt reply,
“ I'll not forgive, and he must die ;
The doom that waits him is his due ;
I do believe my son he slew ;
And it would seem how justly heaven
Hath to my hands the culprit given,
That recompense I now may take
On him for the departed's sake.
Beseech me not—he dies ere noon :
Demand of me another boon ;

I will not even from thee withhold
What thou wilt ask of land or gold."—

XV.

"Sir Ingram, list me if you please ;
From thee I seek not gifts like these !
Since I a widow here was brought,
Seldom indeed have I besought
A favour but thou gav'st it me,
And much for this I honour thee.
But, now, if on the battle-field
His breath thine only son did yield,
Why charge the victor with his life,
Who met him there in open strife ?
Still more—perchance, we may not tell—
Edmond may be alive and well.
As for the ill the prisoner wrought,
Which home upon him you have brought,
He left not England till the day,
When, hunted like a beast of prey,
He northward fled, and join'd afar
The Scots with whom we are at war ;—
O, for the sake of Alice, stay
His doom until another day,
Because—your pity it might move—
She hath bestowed on him her love."—
"Now, nothing more !" De Lisle replied,
And paced the chamber in his pride,
"Instead of pity—that alone
Congeals my softening heart to stone :
A daughter taint me with the shame
That ever brands an outlaw's name—

Sooner I'd wish she ne'er had birth,
Or that I laid her in the earth!"—

XVI.

By tears Dame Heron's woe had vent,
And to the maiden straight she went :—
" Dear Alice, I have tried in vain
Your father's vengeance to restrain ;
But he reviles the prisoner sore,
And I may not beseech him more.
Yet he perhaps may list to thee ;
Go, at his feet a suppliant be,
And ask him, for the love he bore
Thy sainted mother heretofore,
Not to reject thine earnest prayer,
The youthful captive's life to spare."—
The colour dawn'd on Alice' cheek ;
She thank'd the Dame in accents meek,
And went before her father stern ;
Yet by his look could she discern
No sympathy for her distress :
Meantime, her errand he could guess ;
And as she knelt before him there,
He thought upon her mother fair—
Edith, the beautiful, the bright,
Whose glance to him was joy and light.
" Now, Alice, I have cause to be
Displeased, indeed, and wroth with thee ;
Still, for her sake who is at rest—
Who nursed thee kindly at her breast,
I will thy foolish crime forgive ;
Yet this young wanderer shall not live.

Go to thy chamber, girl, and pray
His soul may upward wing its way :
Now, no entreaty—no reply !
Within an hour the youth must die."—

XVII.

He left her stooping there alone,
And round the ramparts he is gone :
With utmost care he set the ward
Each point accessible to guard.
Meeting with Selby on the tower,
They mark'd the beauty of the hour ;
Fair was the scene—in cloudless sky
The brilliant sun ascended high.
Beneath the shelter of a wood,
Southward the fortress grimly stood ;
A bow-shot off, o'er gravelly bed,
Tyne's wavy waters eastward sped ;
And down a glade of lively green
A little chapel's walls were seen ;
Upon the fortress' northern side
A level roof extended wide ;
Of stone 'twas form'd and sunward round,
The loftier turrets o'er it frown'd :
There ready for the fatal stroke
The axe was laid and set the block.
Selby was base, yet did he feel
An ice-like shudder o'er him steal ;
Then Lisle observed, " Thou lookest pale ;
Sad is the outlaw's varied tale :
A monk is with him whispering peace,
So when his admonitions cease,

The struggle will be quickly past,
And I shall be avenged at last.
But, Selby, hark ! I partly fear
These hated Scots may venture near ;
Ride up to yonder height and see
That from the spoilers we are free."—

XVIII.

The wounded youth at last is shriven
And steadfast is his hope of heaven ;
The headsman grim is with him now—
A sturdy wretch with downcast brow,
Seeming as nature, from his birth,
Meant him for vilest use on earth ;
He binds the hapless victim's hands,
Who undismay'd and firmly stands
With vesture loose and short cut hair ;
His eyes upraised, his neck is bare.
Near to him Glisker's sorrowing cry,
In hollow tones, ascendeth high ;
Around the spot two warders stand
Each with a weapon in his hand ;
Upon the block the youth is laid ;
Sure there is now no hope of aid !
Why doth the sullen headsman start ?
A wingéd shaft has pierced his heart,
And seconding that sudden blow,
Two others lay the warders low !
Now changed is Glisker's mournful sound :
His piercing whistle circles round,
While ring the echoes of a horn,
And standards from the wood are borne,

Beneath whose sweep, in numbers strong,
Old Scotland's bravest warriors throng.
No wonder Edwin felt amazed
When, springing up, abroad he gazed ;
Sounds ominous foreboded strife ;
Yet still he drew the breath of life.

XIX.

It was a period of suspense,
For when the dread intelligence,
Like lightning, ran around the tower,
Of the advancing Scottish power,
Alarm was shown on many a brow,
Nor think they more of Edwin now,
Nor Selby e'er return'd to say
That such a force were on their way.
From point to point upon the walls,
De Lisle to every archer calls ;
His sweeping blade he waves on high ;
What kindling fire is in his eye !
The pomp of arms, the trumpet's peal—
The lines and squares of glitt'ring steel—
The banners bright that proudly wave
Above the squadrons of the brave,
Make noble bosoms, beating high,
When roused by faith and loyalty,
To hold of slightest moment life,
If they may vanquish in the strife.
But passion fierce o'er those prevail
Who Chipchase' fortress now assail ;
They seek revenge for grievous wrong,
Since England's king endeavour'd long

To quench, by force and perfidy,
Their country's torch of liberty :
Scarce was there either son or sire
Who had not seen his friend expire,
As he in arms devoted stood
To purchase freedom with his blood.

xx.

Now moving on in front and rear
The Scottish forces gather near ;
Their shining spears upright are borne
Like autumn's ripening ears of corn :
O'er three divisions, waving high,
The standards flutter joyously.
The right is led by Grimesby stern,
Whom in the front you may discern,
Though on his breast appears the sign
Of the Redeemer's cross divine.
Leaving the church to wield the brand,
He bears for Scotland high command ;
Yet not in warfare's wildest scene
Forgets he what he once hath been ;
Subduing force, or humbling pride,
He ever leans to mercy's side :
Strong is he shaped in every limb ;
Robust his form, his visage grim.
Those on the left, 'neath Murray's sway,
Are ready all for furious fray :
Though young their chief, the ardent fire
That warm'd his late departed sire,
So glows within him that he draws
His glittering blade for Scotland's cause :

His cheek had erst been pale by grief ;
In warfare now he finds relief,
And freshness in his visage gleams,
Gazing on England's dales and streams.

XXI.

The centre is by Wallace led ;
Behold the hero's banner spread,
And mark himself, among the spears,
How tall and powerful he appears ;
How broad the plates upon his breast,
How towering high his helmet crest !
Ah ! there is lightning in his glance
As to the onset all advance,
While at each opening on the tower,
Is seen De Lisle's assembled power.
A sign to halt the champion made ;
The lines from right to left obey'd ;
Before the castle Grimesby came,
And loudly call'd De Lisle by name :
He ask'd him to deliver o'er
His men, the fortress, and its store,
If he design'd to save his life,
Or stay the waste of blood and strife.
Should he resist, within an hour
The Scottish force would storm the tower,
And carry sword and wasting fire
From lowest base to topmost spire,
Nor feeble age, nor childhood spare,
Nor matron sage, nor maiden fair !

XXII.

“Thy boastful threatening I defy,”
De Lisle, excited, made reply,
“Since we have trusty swords to wield,
Shame on our heads were we to yield !
In spite of all your forces vast
We will defend us to the last,
And then like warriors bravely die,
Leaving to fame our memory.”—
The shouts that from the turrets rose
Aroused to fiercer ire his foes ;
And now no moment must be lost ;
Detachments sever from the host,
And hasten to the castle wall,
Obedient to each leader’s call,
Cover’d by archers as they go—
A few who deftly bend the bow.
Around, on the assaulted side,
Through loophole or embrasure wide,
The bowmen of De Lisle maintain
A steady arrow flight like rain ;
On the advancing foe they tell,
But they of Scotland mark them well ;
For at each opening, low or high,
The shafts both in and outward fly :
The rush, the rage, the clang of steel,
May well suggest what all would feel.

XXIII.

Near to the basement of the keep
The stirring cries are loud and deep ;

Where easiest the ascent is found,
Or ladder planted on the ground,
Huge stones, that on the top are piled,
Descending down make havoc wild ;
But Wallace, ever safe from harm,
Uprear'd a fragment on his arm,
Which right against the door he sent.
Shook massive wall and battlement ;
Each chamber in the fortress rang ;
An axe then desperately he swang,
And, such the hero's mighty strength,
The studded oak gave way at length ;
In every blow such force he threw,
The splinter'd pieces outward flew ;
And yet the massive bars are strong ;
They may resist his efforts long.
But stay—a moment he withdraws,
And watches—what can be the cause ?
The heavy bolts are backward thrown,
And Edwin, well to Wallace known,
Wounded and pale, flings wide the door ;
The champion paces o'er the floor—
His sword in hand, his target raised ;
In rush his followers all amazed,
But ready, arm'd with glaive and spear,
All opposition down to bear.

XXIV.

Down on the entering foe the while,
Sprang like a tiger bold De Lisle ;
Around him throng'd his gallant few ;
Steel rang on steel and weapons flew ;

For yeoman brave with knight engaged,
And through the tower the conflict raged.

Moved Wallace onward in the fray
Until De Lisle opposed his way,
Who, urged to fury, with a stroke,
On Scotland's chief his falchion broke ;
But ere the latter did him harm,
A damsel caught the hero's arm :
'Twas Alice Lisle, nor distant far
Edwin beheld the press of war ;
And when the champion look'd around
The lover and the maid he found.
Subsides the clang of hostile blows ;
Decreases now the rage of foes ;
De Lisle, all humbled now in pride,
Submits him to the stronger side :
His banner flaunts not to the sky ;
But that of Wallace waves on high,
And flutters to the wind and sun,
For Chipchase tower is lost and won.

EDWIN.

CANTO THE FOURTH.

I.

THERE is a stern delight in war
The brave can feel, surpassing far
Aught that in nature or in art
Elates the soul, incites the heart :
Still, when the wavering point is gain'd,
The worst of bosoms will be pain'd
To mark, upon the place of strife,
A fearful waste of human life.
Alas ! how oft through every age
Such blots appear on history's page !
Even when dark periods pass away,
And dawns a more auspicious day,
Bringing to all the Word of Peace,
These sanguine conflicts do not cease.
In our own time for arts renown'd,
Where knowledge everywhere is found,
Many have mourn'd, with bitter tear,
The loss of those they valued dear,
Who, in the crimson'd battle-field,
At duty's call their life did yield.
Lo, o'er the blue Atlantic wave,
How thousands fill a bloody grave !

In vain they die, and hence the more
 Their hapless fate do we deplore.¹
 O, that the sword were sheath'd for aye !
 Then would we hail the joyful day
 With such a prospect opening bright ;
 For equity must baffle might
 Till wrong be banished from the globe,
 And justice, in her stainless robe,
 Disperse her precious mandates free
 From lowest grade to royalty.

II.

Vain were it for the muse to tell
 Of all the evil that befell
 Northumbria, when, with spear and fire,
 The Scots despoil'd it in their ire,
 Aroused by vengeance for the wrong
 They had endured from England long ;
 Nor man, nor female pure, nor child,
 Nor dwelling 'scaped the havoc wild.
 Before them tower and village bright
 Smiled in the morning's golden light ;
 The sun shone warm, though short the day,
 And hill and valley peaceful lay ;
 Behind them spread a wasted land,
 Where scarce a shelt'ring hut did stand ;
 The autumn's wealth to ashes turn'd—
 The cattle gone—each homestead burn'd.
 All this—a drear and sickening scene—
 We from our chroniclers may glean ;

¹ These lines were written in 1864.

But o'er it let us draw a vail,
And turn we hither to our tale ;
Bid fancy wave her magic wand,
And let our range of sight expand.
Lo, Chipchase fortress once again—
The form, the figures, all are plain !
Another night has pass'd away,
While calm and brightly shines the day.

III.

Where in the castle is De Lisle ?
The highest chamber of the pile,
Where gentle Alice erst was kept,
Where Edwin in his fetters slept,
Is now awarded to the knight,
Who gazes forth, and in his sight,
On every side the Scottish force
Of tented men, and troops of horse,
Hem the grim fortress all around,
From meadow to the highest ground.
Sternly he view'd the motley scene,
Contrasting it with what had been,
And wonder'd next what he should see
Of fortune's wild inconstancy :
Nor felt he for himself alone ;
Alice, though wayward, was his own,
And while each room, or space below,
Was in possession of the foe,
Could she be safe in the turmoil,
When ruffians gloated o'er the spoil ?
He knew it was beyond his power
To aid her in that doubtful hour :

Assistance could but come from heaven,
 And so he pray'd it might be given ;
 Then, partly reconciled, his eye
 More sidewise glanced, when he could spy,
 Upon the level roof beneath,
 Where Edwin nearly met his death,
 That warrior with the minstrel walk,
 And thus, conversing, did he talk :—

IV.

“ Yes,” said the youth, “ my course of life
 Has chequer'd been with joy and strife ;
 But I have sketch'd a picture free
 Of all my early history.
 If I derive from Robin Hood
 The fiery ardour of my blood,
 You have the key to what I've done—
 The love, the hatred I have won.
 Wand'ring by Redesdale wilds, whene'er
 I saw the bounding, antler'd deer,
 Though 'gainst the law it was, I own
 I did my best to hunt him down :
 Or when, in Tyne's clear rushing tide,
 I saw the glitt'ring salmon glide,
 The impulse I could not withstand
 To drag it gasping to the strand.
 Restraint is hateful—we would be,
 As bird or beast in forest, free,
 And like the roving lion prey
 On all within our lordly sway.
 Such are the evils I have wrought—
 Alas, to me full dearly bought ;

For like a felon I was caged—
My better being all outraged !
O, I had doubtless died if she,
Who like an angel is to me,
Had not dispell'd my darksome night,
And bless'd me with her glorious light."—

V.

De Lisle was anxious all to hear,
For Edwin's accents reach'd his ear ;
But a stout yeoman enter'd now
Where stood the knight with pallid brow—
Told him respectfully, but free,
To go with him in company ;
At once the prisoner gave consent,
And down the winding passage went.
Entering a high and spacious room,
De Lisle half wist to learn his doom :
Wallace he mark'd, and Grimesby there,
Who yielded him attention fair :
The latter rose with manner bland,
And offer'd to De Lisle his hand,
Who by the act appear'd amazed,
And on his face intently gazed :
A smile o'er Grimesby's features came,
And then De Lisle pronounced his name—
His yielding fingers warmly press'd,
While deep emotion stirr'd his breast.
The present hour was now forgot—
His own misfortune—Grimesby's lot :
Wales they recall'd, where every morn
They muster'd, being comrades sworn ;

And were, though years had glided o'er,
Brothers by knighthood evermore.

VI.

When Wallace' heart was roused to ire,
His face, expressive, glow'd like fire ;
And hapless they, who, leagued with foes,
His trenchant weapon would oppose :
But when in social, quiet mood,
His every feature boding good,
The blandness of his manner told,
On his behalf, with young and old.
Forward he moved with stately grace,
And earnest frankness in his face :—
“ De Lisle,” said he, “ no heavy blow
We deal against a prostrate foe :
Your fortress we by arms have gain'd,
And you in spirit will be pain'd
To lose your cherish'd liberty,
And quit your home and family.
To Grimesby you are close allied
By ties I wish not to divide ;
But give the same approval due,
For bounty thence hath flow'd to you.
The castle is your own again ;
Yet, while it please us to remain,
No opposition must we see,
And here, Sir Knight, I make you free.
No harm, no evil shall befall
The meanest servant in your hall ;
Nor offering bring, nor ransom send ;
You are our Grimesby's honour'd friend.”—

De Lisle was taken by surprise ;
Yet soon to Wallace he replies,
Acknowledging with thanks sincere
The gift o'er all he valued dear.

VII.

When Wallace and his friend were gone,
Not long the knight remain'd alone ;
He sought his daughter's quiet bower
In the west angle of the tower :
Dora was seated near the fire,
And when fair Alice saw her sire,
She rose and met his kind embrace,
O'erjoy'd at gazing on his face.
True, she had loosed the twisted bands
From off her helpless lover's hands—
Assisted him to arm, and more,
Convey'd him downward to the door,
When he undid the bolts that gave
Admittance free to Wallace brave ;
Yet this, she thought, would tell meanwhile
In favour of her sire, De Lisle.
Of late he harsh to her had proved,
Still she her parent dearly loved ;
And, even as danger hemm'd him round,
The more devoted was she found.
But lo ! Dame Heron enter'd now ;
Benignant seem'd her eye and brow :
She spoke of favours she had known,
With acts of kindness to her shown
From him of Chipchase tower the lord ;
And here she came of her accord

To make requital, through his leave,
By what he would with joy receive.

VIII.

The matron for a space withdrew,
When, hark ! a sound of laughter grew
So loud the fortress almost rang
By Glisker's wild and bellowing clang ;
Nor ceased it till the kindly Dame
In haste return'd, and with her came
De Lisle's own son—the darling boy ;
Then throbb'd his father's heart with joy,
Who straightway seized and eager press'd
The welcome stripling to his breast.
Even gentle Alice could not hide
Her feelings, standing by his side ;
But clasp'd his neck, and sobbing free,
She kiss'd his cheek in ecstasy.
At length, the smiling youth declared
What generous kindness he had shared ;
How Edwin, in the heat of strife,
Strain'd every nerve to save his life ;
How Grimesby grave had to him shown
Such care as he had been his own.
Glisten'd with tears the father's eye ;
Fair Alice heaved a grateful sigh ;
Then strove they to divine the cause,
And each a free conclusion draws.

IX.

When gratulations kind were done,
And Lisle was seated by his son,

Owen, the minstrel, came in sight,
And craved, that of his grace the knight
Would a brief audience grant, where she,
The honour'd Dame, might present be :
His usual dress aside was cast ;
A warrior seem'd he at the last ;
His tone, besides, was bold and clear
As he had been Sir Ingram's peer.
He had his wish—and while the rest
Withdrew, the harper made request,
In the Dame's ear, that she would take
Courage and plead for Edwin's sake.
“ I come, De Lisle,” he said, “ to seek
That your own Alice, mild and meek,
To Edwin true may give her hand
In solemn wedlock's hallow'd band.
I know you view my friend with scorn,
And much of evil hath he borne ;
But blow your malice now to air,
And bless him with your daughter fair :
He is, although obscure his name,
Deserving of extended fame ;
And this he will achieve full soon,
Though you deny him aid or boon.”—

X.

“ It may not be,” replied De Lisle ;
“ Dame Heron, I observe you smile ;
My hate to love I cannot turn,
And fickleness I ever spurn.”—
“ My friend,” she said, in earnest mood,
“ All rankling evil change to good !

Edwin a favourite was before,
 And I approve him more and more ;
 By word of mine he Alice met
 When with your spears you on him set ;
 The flame at first I did not light,
 But would not true affection blight :
 And should the youth obtain her hand,
 What I possess of house or land
 I well may render to them free,
 Without a favour sought of thee."—
 " You press me closely," said the knight,
 " Yet will I not renounce my right ;
 Edwin to me hath kindness done
 By tender treatment of my son ;
 And hence do I forgive him free
 For all his reckless acts to me :
 But to adopt him, be his sire—
 Seat him in hall, at board and fire"—
 " Stay !" said the minstrel. " Look, De Lisle,
 Know you that ring ?" and with a smile
 He placed the circlet in his hand :
 " By this, your daughter I demand ;
 The maid is mine, whate'er betide,
 So Alice must be Edwin's bride !"—

XI.

Though joy supreme rush'd to her heart,
 The matron show'd no sudden start ;
 But still, attentive as she seem'd,
 Her countenance with pleasure beam'd.
 The knight of Chipchase stood a space,
 And gazed upon Sir Howel's face ;

For he it was, and none but he,
Who set De Lisle from prison free :
Then as remembrance fairly woke,
De Lisle, astonish'd, to him spoke :—
“ My friend, forgive me—changes come
So close, methinks I should be dumb
Until at length they pass away,
And I can then the end survey.
Determined have I onward striven
To steer my course, yet am I driven,
Like ship at sea by winds, away,
And cannot anchor in my bay ;
For powers above me thus control
The utmost efforts of my soul ;
Yet, judging rightly, it is fit
That humbly I to this submit ;
Upward I'll look for guidance still,
And bend me to my Maker's will !”—
Sir Howel said, “ Be cheer'd, De Lisle ;
Soon at this movement will you smile ;
It seems to thee a doubtful spell ;
Yet has it happen'd wondrous well !
Now, madam, would you please to bring
Our Wallace who should be a king,
With Grimesby, Edwin, Alice dear,
That all a truthful tale may hear !”—

XII.

“ If there be one,” De Lisle replied,
“ Whose steady friendship I have tried,
To whom in midst of broil and strife
I owe my liberty, my life,

Thou art the man, and, far or near,
 Our solemn compact I revere.
 Sir Howel, suffering hast thou borne ;
 Thy hair is gray, thy features worn :
 So soon as this wild storm may cease,
 And at our homes we dwell in peace,
 Be thou with me a welcome guest
 To live as seems to thee the best.
 The autumn o'er, when dawns the day,
 We'll hie us to the chase away ;
 Follow the fleeting deer in sport,
 And homeward, at the close, resort ;
 Then, when the wintry nights are long,
 The music of thy harp and song
 Will quickly speed the festive hours,
 And full enjoyment will be ours,
 Relating, by the blazing fire,
 The noble deeds of knight and squire.
 But lo, the Dame with others near ;
 And following also in the rear,
 Grimesby is there and Wallace bold ;
 Now may we hear thy story told :
 My honour'd guests all seated be,
 And list Sir Howel's history !”—

XIII.

“ How strange it seems,” began the knight,
 “ That now are gather'd in my sight
 Two warriors tried who, out of three,
 In faithful union join'd with me !
 Before loved Wales, in evil hour,
 Was yielded up to England's power,

Foemen they were to me and mine ;
Yet did their manly virtues shine
So bright before me that I grew
To love and honour men so true :
We swore that we would brothers be
In peace or war's extremity,
And faithful service duly yield
To each in hall or battle-field :
If in opposing ranks we stood,
'Twas not to shed each other's blood,
But courtesy and aid extend,
Unsought, to relative and friend.
Alas, that I was absent when,
By vengeance moved, my countrymen
On Rhudlan castle wreak'd their strife,
And Gerald Heron lost his life :
Pity it was :—his widow here
Shed for him many a bitter tear,
While I his loss did long regret :
It chills my lightsome moments yet !

xiv.

“ When once our friend from cell was free,
Upon enquiry made by me,
I found a female who had seen
The onslaught and at Rhudlan been :
Our Dame unto her aye was kind,
And this so influenced her mind
That in the conflict she did prove
Worthy her benefactress' love.
Soon as De Lisle from horseback swerved,
Forward she glided, and preserved

The child of Heron, blithe and sweet,
From 'midst the prancing horses' feet :
Knowing her people fill'd with ire
Against the foe, she did retire,
And in a distant lonely dell,
Conceal'd, her charge she kept it well.
But, her position to advance,
She, with her mate, would visit France ;
Though ere she ventured on the sea,
The helpless boy was left with me.
Alas ! the land where she was born
By robbers base was rent and torn ;
And thus its people sped away,
Hating a despot's ruthless sway :
O, what could tempt them to remain !
Their glory fled—their princes slain !

xv.

“ For a kind nurse I look'd around,
And one—a widow sage—I found ;
In humble state she lived alone ;
Husband and children all were gone.
He was a gallant wight her sire ;
But drew upon him England's ire
By hunting through her forests green
Till she outlaw'd him in her spleen ;
The rich, the poor—the base, the good,
Have heard of dauntless Robin Hood.
A refuge found he in our land—
We welcomed him with open hand ;
And hence his daughter loved our hills,
Our spreading vales and brawling rills :

She, growing up to middle life,
Became a good and frugal wife—
A mother too—but trouble came,
And she was left—a mournful dame.
She took the child—its line unknown—
Saying, she'd tend it as her own :
In thanks I only could reply,
Knowing her faith and constancy.
But clouds had now obscured my day ;
I was compell'd to haste away—
My life in danger—haunts beset—
My very foes, unknown, I met ;
So left I Wales, my father-land,
And sought by sea a foreign strand.

XVI.

“ To Italy my way I found,
And trod her spots of hallow'd ground,
Where men of letters once had dwelt,
And at her poets' tombs I knelt.
The skill I had in music told,
Where'er I went, as much as gold ;
By it I gain'd access to all
In humble hut and lordly hall.
Those strains familiar to mine ear,
My countrymen delight to hear,
Simple and pure, surpassing art,
Obtain such influence o'er the heart,
That prelates, nobles, princes high
Have loudly praised my minstrelsy.
Returning thence by Spain and France,
A faithful friend I met by chance,

Who said that she who nursed the boy
 At home had met with such annoy,
 To merry Sherwood she withdrew,
 Well known to her when life was knew.
 Now, list to me—our comrade good
 No grandson is of Robin Hood :
 That I might know him when we met,
 I had a precious amulet—
 A ransom won by sire of mine
 From Moslem prince in Palestine—
 I gave him this, which in your sight
 Evinces all I say is right :
 From Gerald Heron is he sprung !”—
 Then Edwin to his mother clung,
 While she embraced him with delight,
 And eyes were moisten'd at the sight ;
 But, hark ! when once the tale did close,
 A strain in pleasing measure rose :

XVII.

Song.

All joy to the twain
 Who were suffering in sadness ;
 We see how their pain
 Is succeeded by gladness.
 No worthier youth
 Ever traversed these valleys ;
 Nor maiden for truth
 Can outvie gentle Alice.

Ye fairest of flowers,
 All round them be springing ;

Ye birds in your bowers,
 Still delight them with singing !
 No sorrow nor blight
 E'er discourage or move them ;
 And sun, be thou bright
 In the sky that's above them !

O waft to them, spring !
 In thy genial meetness,
 The breezes that bring
 Fresh enjoyment or sweetness.
 And, summer, come down !
 Of thy splendour and beauty,
 Wreathe each a fair crown,
 Or thou fail'st of thy duty.

Rich autumn, bestow,
 If it be thy good pleasure,
 Upon them a flow
 Of thy bounty and treasure.
 Each evil they hate,
 May it harass them never ;
 In health and estate
 Be they happy for ever !

XVIII.

Wallace and Murray stood around
 And much they marvell'd at the sound,
 For they had heard, through evening damp,
 That voice before they left the camp ;
 But plaintive was its mellow hum,
 Sueing they would to Chipchase come :

Admonish'd thus, by break of day,
When ready all, they moved away.
Soon as the ditty ceased, a shout
Of laughter rang the fort throughout,
Which, wavering, seem'd at last to change
To sweetest music, wild and strange ;
But doubly joyous in its swell,
That they who listen'd loved it well.
Needs not the rapture to declare •
Of Edwin brave and Alice fair :
The anguish once these lovers bore,
That hour repaid them all and more :
Dame Heron with her children twain
Rejoiced as she were young again :
De Lisle in candour frankly told
How heaven his purpose had controll'd,
That, free from aught of base alloy,
His cup might overflow with joy.
Wallace, delighted, 'mid the rest
His pleasure openly express'd ;
And as Sir Howel's tale was prized,
He hoped the knight would be advised
His history downward to relate,
Until he enter'd Chipchase gate.

XIX.

“ Most honour'd chief,” the other said,
“ When I these foreign lands survey'd,
A want they had, I knew not why,
Though smiling 'neath a genial sky !
They were not like my hilly home ;
I could not through them farther roam,

But turn'd me to the deep blue sea,
Where masted ships were floating free.
On board I went—the waves were high,
Yet we o'erpass'd them gallantly.
Unknown, I reach'd my native shore ;
My early friends I saw no more ;
But, dreading foes might hem me round,
From Wales my way I northward found.
I heard even in my journeying there
How you were rallying Scotland fair,
That she might burst the tyrant's chain,
And boldly be herself again !
Though weak may be my ready hand,
I come to aid your gallant band :
It warms my bosom to behold
The face of one so brave and bold,
Whose noble deeds and worthy aim
Will crown him with undying fame :
To patriots true his name shall be
The watchword hence of LIBERTY !”—

xx.

Wallace replied in grateful tone,
“ Amongst my brethren, I for one
Here thank thee duly that thy steel
Is to be drawn for Scotland's weal :
As for myself, I merely stand
Devoted to my native land :
Life—fortune—all I have below,
Upon that country I bestow ;
And if by arms we make her free,
'Tis recompense enough for me !

But Edwin, I must turn aside
 To wish thee happy with thy bride ;
 Perverse thy fortune hath been long,
 And oft hast thou encounter'd wrong,
 Yet, as the shades of early day
 In morning splendour melt away,
 So crowding evils from thee fly ;
 Thy sun shines in a summer sky !
 Now heaven assist us of its grace !
 I were unworthy of my place
 Did I not yield to each his due,
 And, Edwin, thou wert ever true :
 We must prepare and dub thee knight ;
 My Grimesby, see that all is right :
 It is a debt we justly owe—
 An honour that we must bestow."—

XXI.

When night had settled o'er the land,
 See Edwin in the chapel stand !
 Now Edward is his Christian name ;
 He at the font received the same :
 Array'd is he from head to heel
 In mail and plate of polish'd steel :
 Alone, he watches through the night,
 And issues thence at morning light.
 Limit of time will not allow
 To tell of rites of knighthood now ;
 But first, in simple robe of white,
 Was dress'd the youthful neophyte ;
 And over this was loosely spread,
 Symbolical, a scarf of red :

Alice, with blushes like the morn,
A lock of hair hath from him shorn.
Full soon the fleeting moments sped ;
Again was he to chapel led ;
The monk who shrived him had, erewhile,
Gone on his way to Hexham pile ;
But Grimesby there, in sacred vest,
His sword upon the altar blest ;
And Edward, with uplifted eye,
Has ta'en the oaths of chivalry.
Brief exhortation Grimesby gave,
That he should hence, on land or wave,
The injured widow's cause defend,
And to the helpless be a friend,
Honour and virtuous love uphold,
Nor to the faithful e'er be cold,
And thus the guerdon he would prove,
By fame below and bliss above.

XXII.

To Wallace next has Edward gone,
And, kneeling on the floor of stone,
He gave assent, with clasped hands,
To what the powerful chief commands,
That he religion keep in view,
And to his order still be true.
Fair Alice—judge what pride was hers
As on his heels she bound the spurs,
While Ernest did the armour bring,
And soon Sir Ingram join'd the ring ;
Nor did they cease till, all complete,
He shone in mail from head to feet ;

And Grimesby with a practised hand
 Around him girt the glittering brand.
 Thus full equipp'd he bent him low,
 And on his neck received the blow
 From Wallace' hand, with falchion bright,
 That made him there a belted knight :—
 “Sir Edward Heron, rise,” he said,
 “God and the blessed saints thee aid !
 In trelliced bower or open hall
 Long may thy footstep welcome fall ;
 And while that weapon thou shalt wield,
 Or floats thy pennon in the field,
 May prosperous fortune o'er thee shine
 Until a kingdom's praise be thine.”—

XXIII.

No longer now in festive train
 May Wallace or his troops remain—
 A sterner task they must perform ;
 And gathering like a winter storm,
 With driving hail and piercing cold,
 To sweep through every house and fold ;
 Nor weakly arm nor strongest spare,
 All for the ruthless course prepare.
 Nothing they lack for present use
 That Chipchase castle can produce :
 Within, each secret nook is shown—
 Each vaulted chamber open thrown ;
 Without, among the warriors wide,
 Provisions amply are supplied.
 Wallace, unarm'd, except his blade,
 Walks with Sir Edward down a glade ;

Dark thickets grow on either side,
And Tyne's bright waters near them glide ;
Here, shaded by a broad pine tree,
The new-made knight could plainly see
A figure, with a cross-bow bent,
Who aim'd his bolt, with base intent,
Full upon Wallace, and let fly ;
But in the twinkling of an eye
Between them could Sir Edward glide ;
The whizzing arrow pierced his side :
To save the chief he caught the wound,
And fell before him on the ground.

XXIV.

'Twas Selby's self, Sir Edward knew ;
Then Wallace out his falchion drew,
And as the wretch like lightning flies,
Upon his track the patriot hies ;
Through prickly thorn and hazel bush
Both caitiff and pursuer rush :
Clearing the brushwood at a bound,
The former reach'd the open ground.
Ah, he will 'scape, by footstep light,
The threat'ning steel of Wallace wight !
But, strange to say, a shapeless thing,
By speed of foot or flight of wing,
Before him skims and barks outright,
Dog-like, to stay him in his flight.
Half-air, half-substance, mark it fleet
Around his legs and at his feet,
Until he stumble on his knee,
When Glisker shouts aloud for glee :

Still, Selby rose, and, bounding fast,
Tyne's winding course he gain'd at last,
Then plunged within its limpid wave ;
But at the moment, Wallace' glaive,
Descending swiftly, cleft his brain ;
Sudden he sank, nor rose again.

XXV.

The yeomen, wond'ring, gather round,
And raise Sir Edward from the ground ;
They bear him to the castled pile ;
Sorrow unfeign'd was there the while !
Alice with anguish deep was wrung ;
His pitying mother o'er him hung.
The wound they search with utmost care,
Nor do they yield them to despair ;
With all the aid they can contrive
The wounded youth may yet survive.
Now, at the sounding of a horn,
Away the Scottish flags are borne :
Wallace hath bid De Lisle adieu,
And so hath Grimesby ever true ;
But when Sir Howel moved to go,
An outburst fresh there was of woe ;
His friends in earnest did him pray
He would among them longer stay,
For in his absence they should mourn,
And hence he promised to return.
The horsemen down the valley wind ;
Sir Edward now is left behind ;
But tending him are ever near
His hopeful bride and mother dear :

Nor cease their care till he again
Vigour of limb and health regain ;
And soon arrived the morning tide
When Alice Lisle became his bride.

XXVI.

War's storm o'er Tyne's fair valley swept ;
Young maidens sigh'd and mothers wept,
Till spring in robes of green return'd,
Wafting relief to those who mourn'd :
Dark Grimesby fought for Scotland well,
Until at Bannockburn he fell :
Close by his side Sir Howel stood,
And there avenged his comrade's blood ;
He saw the glorious sun go down
When BRUCE acquired the Scottish crown ;
But came and dwelt, in life's decline,
Within the sound of sweeping Tyne.
A gallant knight, surpass'd by none,
Became De Lisle's beloved son ;
Yet foremost ever in the strife,
With sword in hand he lost his life :
Of Chipchase and its yeoman band,
Sir Edward then obtain'd command.
Many the seasons he did ride,
The first on all the Border side ;
Valour and virtue both combined
To warm his heart—imbue his mind ;
And Alice with her eye of love,
Pure as an angel from above,
His higher thoughts could well engage,
And cheer'd him through declining age.

Three hopeful sons were like their sire ;
They had his skill—his martial fire ;
Two daughters shared not less of grace
Than shone within their mother's face :
Thus, glided onward years untold,
Until the parents' hearts were cold.

KATE RIDLEY:

A WITCH TALE.

TOLD CHIEFLY IN THE NORTHERN DIALECT.

She was a wife
That to her husband stood as true as steel,
And would have gone through peril, wave, and fire,
To aid him in the battle-field of life.



TO MY BELOVED SISTER,
MARGARET A. ANDREWS,
“TENDIR AND TREWE,”¹
THIS TALE
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

¹ HOLLAND'S *BUKE OF THE HOWLAT*.



KATE RIDLEY: A WITCH TALE.

1.
WHEN famous Bess the Queen was gone,
And James succeeded to the throne,
Auld Satan kept himsel' fu' busy
Wi' temptin' mony a greedy hizzie,
By offering to her power and riches,
If she would join his squad o' witches.
And tho' weel kenn'd by great and sma'
As head and chief o' liars a',
His close adherents werena few,
For willing numbers round him drew,
Wha enter'd into compact wi' him
To do his wark and honour gie him.
Even he, to please and make them vaunty,
Invited whiles eighteen or twenty
To meet him during midnight mirk,
By haunted mound or ancient kirk.
Nae want had they o' horses true
That through the air like wildfowl flew :

Where men were scant, a hazel switch,
 Broom-besom, ragweed, served the witch ;¹
 Each wi' a rider on its back,
 Skimming above the straightest track,
 Till meadow, moorland, forest past,
 A' safe they lighted down at last.

II.

North-westward frae Newcastle town,
 Where clayey lands are bare and brown,
 A tenant lived—a decent fellow,
 Jack Ridley hight ; his hair was yellow ;
 Erect and buirdly was his form ;
 His manner blunt, his bosom warm.
 Upright himsel', his simple mind
 To what was generous aye inclined ;
 And if misfortune chanced to bang him,
 He ne'er suspected man would wrang him ;
 But thought, by eident wark and care,
 To pay his rent and hae to spare :
 Thus, did he labour soon and late.
 A wife he had, they ca'd her Kate ;

¹ " While they on cats, or clowns, or broomstaff ride "

ALLAN RAMSAY.

" Wild-strawes and corne-strawes wilbe horses to ws, an ve put thaim be-
 twixt our foot, and say, ' HORSE AND HATTOK, IN THE DIVELLIS NAME ! ' "—
Isobell Gowdie. This extract is given from her "Confessions" of witchcraft taken at "AULDERNE the threttein day of Aprill, 1662 yeiris." The whole are printed in the Appendix to PITCAIRN's *Ancient Criminal Trials in Scotland*, vol. iii. pp. 602-616. In a note, the editor, referring to the particular branches of this record, very justly says :— "The above details are perhaps in all respects the most extraordinary in the history of witchcraft of this or any other country." Isobell was spouse to John Gilbert, in Loochloy (Lochlee), now a farm, about three miles east of Nairn.

Of middle size she was and viewly ;
 To Jack her heart beat ever truly :
 Kindly, industrious, carefu', douse,
 She snug and cleanly kept the house ;
 The swine and calves she duly fed,
 And span when ithers slept abed.
 Yet a' the zeal o' man and wife,
 Altho' they toil'd as 'twere for life,
 Avail'd them not, they couldna pay
 When cam' the frightfu' reckoning day ;
 And being honest folk and true,
 Anxious to hand ilk ane his due,
 Nae cheering prospect might they see,
 While baith were sad as they could be.

III.

Far eastward in a genial clime,
 The landlord chiefly spent his time ;
 But most of all he loved to be
 In classic Greece or Italy :
 Not for the ancient glories there,
 But that each hill and dale was fair,
 The sky unchanging—bluely bright,
 Radiant the day and soft the night,
 Laden with grapes the tangling vine,
 Provisions low and cheap the wine ;
 For he was but a selfish knave,
 Mair greedy than an open grave ;
 Eager to screw ilk poor man tightly,
 Thinking he only acted rightly.
 As is a knife to butcher-man,
 The steward deftly fit his han',

And to the utmost did endeavour
 To win and keep his Honour's favour,
 By fleecing tenants right and left,
 Making them pay rack-rent or shift ;
 But mainly practising his system
 On such as couldna weel resist him.
 If he had business-dealings wi' you,
 Or he thereon engaged to see you,
 Snake-like around you he would wind,
 His promises he couldna mind ;¹
 But downright he would swear you said
 What never entered i' your head :
 In ilka case he proved a pinner,²
 And few might cope wi' Dicky Skinner.

IV.

In figure he was tall and lanky ;
 Ye might hae ta'en him for a flunkie,
 Save that his master as we guess
 Had cled him in a better dress :
 His lengthy coat that ance was black
 Had changed its colour on his back ;
 But, sae that he might look mair sprightly,
 Around him it was button'd tightly :
 The trousers gray, his linen worn
 Seem'd as if shaped ere he was born.
 The kerchief round his craig was blue,
 His hair and beard o' Judas' hue :
 Reddish his visage, as if he
 Would swig at times the barley-bree ;

¹ *Mind*—remember.

² An unscrupulous fellow who would turn every point to his own advantage.

But, void o' nobleness o' nature,
 The scrub was seen in ilka feature ;
 The mouth alone, wi' lips sae thin,
 Reveal'd the heartlessness within.
 His peerin', peepin' een were brown,
 That by their cast bespoke the loun ;
 For rarely ever had he grace
 To look you fully i' the face.
 By lease the farm was let to Jack,
 And firm the ither held the tack,
 Wha o' his victim took the measure,
 Draining him yearly o' his treasure,
 Till the poor fellow saw, wi' pain,
 He scarce might ca' a stirk his ain.
 To Dicky's tricks he was nae stranger,
 Sighing, he knew himsel' in danger ;
 And tho' at bottom not a coward,
 In hate an' dread he held the steward.

v.

Jack owed the landlord—nae dispute o't,
 Even solemn judges couldna doubt it ;
 But had the law been set aside,
 And upright men the difference tried,
 Poor Jack in equity might count
 On getting back a large amount.
 Besides his stock, the hungry soil
 Took a' his watching, a' his toil—
 In winter grat, in summer gird,¹
 But ne'er an average crap return'd.

¹ Clayey soils are always wet in winter, and they crack on the surface during the heat of summer. An unfortunate farmer upon land of this

Lang, lang had he wi' hardship striven,
 And, when to desperation driven,
 He thought he couldna manage better
 Than to the landlord write a letter,
 Making o' a' his grief a clearance,
 And gently asking due forbearance.
 In many a bright, enchanting scene
 And province had the landlord been :
 Fair Lombardy he travell'd through,
 And there in Padua linger'd now,
 Mingling wi' necromancers strange,
 Who labour'd nature's laws to change.
 Jack's plain epistle reach'd him duly,
 When courteous he replied, tho' coolly :
 The point in question—wae betide it—
 He left the steward to decide it.

VI.

Upon Jack Ridley hung a curse ;
 A backward harvest made things warse :
 October now was nearly past,
 And gusty winds were blawing fast.
 The stock at market wadna sell,
 And what to do he couldna tell :
 He tried to borrow, mair or less,
 But here he met wi' nae success.
 A day or twa—the deuce light on him—
 That yerker, Dick, will be upon him !
 What can be done ? Poor Kate was vex'd,
 And, like her husband, sair perplex'd.

description, on being asked why he could not make ends meet, replied :—
 “ The land greets a' the winter and girns a' the summer. It never yields
 me a fair crap, and how can I pay either landlord or ony body else ? ”

She had some years afore she married
 In MEG o' MELDON's¹ service tarried :
 A faithfu' drudge for little siller ;
 But kind her mistress aye was till her.
 Around the country, Meldon's dame
 For witchcraft bore a noted name :
 Both far and near, o'er sea and land,
 None could her wondrous art withstand ;
 Yet Kate believed the powerfu' charmer
 Might do her good, but wadna harm her.

VII.

Kate set to wark, and that same night
 She put her household matters right :
 Next morning soon her chest she lockit,
 The landlord's note was in her pocket,
 And then, as brighten'd up the day,
 To Meldon straight she held her way,
 Saw her auld mistress, tell'd her story ;
 The lady for her sake was sorry,
 Yet thought the prospect lookit better
 When she perused the far-come letter,
 For by its aid, if not neglected,
 A lucky cast might be expected.

¹ In 1842, the author drew up an account of "MEG OF MELDON," chiefly from what is known of her in HODGSON'S *Northumberland*, Part II. Vol ii. p. 12, which appeared in RICHARDSON'S *Table Book*, Leg. Div. Vol. i. pp. 135-141. The historian and his biographer, Dr. Raine, both came to the conclusion that she was Margaret Selby, second wife to Sir William Fenwick of Wallington, who was knighted by James I. in 1603. She was daughter to William Selby of Newcastle, and brought her husband a large dower, which was advanced on mortgage upon Meldon, whereby the popular family of the Herons were eventually ejected from that estate. Her will was dated 2nd November, 1688.

She glanced it o'er wi' carefu' look,
Syne placed it in her pocket book ;
While Kate sat down to eat the best,
Thraw care aside, and be at rest.
Meg seem'd a noble, haughty dame,
Of stately step and lofty frame ;
Her hair was dark, her forehead high,
Her features good, and black her eye :
Wide was her hoop, of worsted brown
The texture of her flowing gown,
But tightly drawn where it embraced
Her bosom full and rounded waist,
The arms upturn'd, and there below
Were linen sleeves as white as snow ;
A fair wrought frill, without a speck,
Of ample circle graced her neck ;
And such her bearing and her sway,
None dared her orders disobey.

VIII.

When evening came in dusky gloom,
Ascending to an upper room,
The lady led poor Kate, where she
Was sworn to solemn secrecy ;
Then in her ear she did unfold
A scheme which must not yet be told.
It was a deed of daring might,
To be achieved at dead of night—
A ride, unhallow'd, through the air,
Perhaps for twenty miles or mair—
Colleaguing wi' the powers o' hell—
A meeting wi' the Fiend himsel' ;

Yet meat was not to cross her mouth,
 Nor drop o' drink to quench her drouth,
 Nor scarce a word was Kate to speak,
 Nor help frae sprite or mortal seek;
 But calm and cool perform her part,
 And be unmoved in will and heart.
 Even then, suppose she caught nae ill,
 It was by force o' hand and skill,
 Beside the swiftness o' her steed,
 That she o'er a' the lave might speed.
 Kate's nerves at this were like to fail her;
 But she recall'd her lack o' siller,
 And thought that if the plot gaed weel
 It wasna wrang to cheat the Deil;
 For it became her, as a wife,
 To aid her man¹ at risk o' life.
 The person pitch'd upon to bear her
 Frae Meldon lived twa miles or nearer,
 In a small ale-house by himsel';
 And, speaking o' him, Kate did tell
 How he had come, when corn was dear,
 And gat on credit aits and bear,²
 Till he was pounds indebted to them,
 Nor plack nor farthing wad he gie them;
 The brass³ he wan he spent in drinking:
 O'er mony, aye, like Tammy Jenkyn!

IX.

Four hours or so had quickly pass'd,
 And Kate prepared to move at last:

¹ *Man*—husband.

² *Bear*—a rough species of barley.

³ *Brass*—money.

Meg to a closet did her bring;
 Upon her finger placed a ring;
 Produced a slender leathern band,
 Which she would carry in her hand;
 Wi' magic salve her een anointed,
 And then she ready stood appointed.
 Away gaed Kate—the ring she wore
 Imparted skill unknown before:
 No dread had she of lone midnight,
 Of robber stern, or savage wight,
 Of ghost or spectre, imp or fay;
 'Twas to her as the morn of May!
 Her energy did so abound—
 So lightly did she tread the ground,
 That where her path would darkly lie
 She felt as she could o'er it fly.
 Then, near to Jenkyn's house she drew,
 Beside a glen where wildwood grew;
 A lattice on the northern side¹
 At her first touch flew open wide:
 Within she went—her hand she laid
 On the poor man asleep in bed,
 Wha rose as he were mesmerised,
 Put on his clothes as she devised,
 Cam' outward to the open air.
 Nae minute now had Kate to spare;
 She shook the strap above his head,
 He bent him low, his arms he spread;
 Upon his back hersel' she threw,
 Cried, “Horsie, up!”² and off they flew.

¹ “We went in at the windowes.”—*Isobell Gowdie*.

² “I haid a little horse, and wold say, ‘HORSE AND HATTOCK, IN THE

X.

O'er trees and bushes soaring high,
 Up raise they to the northern sky:
 Calm was the night, the sternies glanced,
 The streamers bright before them danced;
 But soon did Kate, wi' piercing sight,
 Mark others likewise on their flight.
 Cam' frae Newcastle fishwife Grizzie—
 A red-nosed, swearing, tearing hizzie,
 Best at a fight of a' her clan:
 She had for horse her ain gudeman;
 The branks¹ upon his head he bore
 That ance for scaulding him she wore.
 Her neighbour Tib was rather kittle;
 She tried a cat but thought it little;
 And it fell out the buxom jade
 A new-made birken-besom rade.
 O'er meadow, moor, and trees they sallied;
 Kate, who was last, the others rallied.
 By Shaftoe-crag they held their way;
 Cambo at length beneath them lay;
 Onward frae thence to Harwood-head
 Tib's birken courser took the lead,

DIVELLIS NAME! And then ve vold file away, quhair ve vold be, ewin as
 strawes wold file wpon an hie-way."—*Isobell Gowdie*.

¹ The branks are a sort of headpiece, made chiefly of hoop iron, to put upon a scold, with a flat prong in front to enter her mouth and prevent her using her tongue. To a ring behind was attched a rope, whereby her husband drove her before him by way of punishment. In Newcastle this utensil was employed, in its legitimate line, during the Commonwealth, and is mentioned in Gardiner's *England's Grievance*, wherein a representation of it is supplied. Another may be seen in Brand's *Newcastle*, see plate of *Miscellaneous Antiquities*, Vol. ii, fig. 2, p. 40. It was long retained in the Police Court, and has recently been transferred to the custody of the Society of Antiquaries.

The bushy sweeping part it bore her,
The shank it cleft the air before her;
Then follow'd Kate in lightsome cheer,
And Grizzie's pad was pechin' near.
O'er Elsden high a bleezing light
Frae the Mote-hills burst on their sight,
On Gallow-law it southward stream'd,
Lone Billsmoor in its radiance gleam'd,
The Castle redder'd in its glow,
The stream reflected it below.

XL

Ilk rider to the Mote was boun' ;
Arrived, they gently lighted down ;
Wee elfish grooms stood ready there,
Ilk horse was handed to their care ;
And syne the carlins met together,
Weel pleased, it seem'd, wi' ane anither ;
For brawlly Kate did understand
The matter she had taen on hand ;
And those beside her never doubtit
She kenn'd the splore and a' about it.
On came the Deil, o'erjoy'd to see them,
And, shakin' hands fu' kindly wi' them,
Welcomed them to the merry meeting :
Wi' this Kate's heart began a-beating ;
But still remembering how to act—
For she had prudence, skill, and tact—
The fluttering tremor she allay'd,
And look'd around her undismay'd.
Never had she, before that night,
Fancied sae strange and wild a sight.

XII.

Aloft, by sleight o' deevils heezed,
Three chandeliers aboon them bleezed—
Six lights a piece—ilk light a scull
Wi' human fat burn'd lippin' full.
The owners had been rogues wha made
Religion but a worldly trade—
A badge they deem'd the best of ony
To hide deceit and bring them money ;
O'er a' around them, Satan swore
They never shed sic light before.
Off at a side the guests might mark
A table made o' Noah's ark ;
Thereon lay relics, one by one,
Collected since the world began :—
A branch cut frae the tree o' knowledge,
Fresh was the bark and green the foliage ;
A splinter broken frae the wood
That Cain had dyed in Abel's blood ;
Ane o' the gods frae Laban steal'd,
That Rachel at her hip conceal'd ;
Bathsheba's hair, a lock weel scented,
That she to David ance presented ;
The bolt that reft Uriah's life ;
The tongue o' Job's auld wicked wife ;
A finger o' the idol Bel ;
The under jaw o' Grecian Nell,
On which the lip where Paris revell'd
Remain'd, but wither'd sair and shrivell'd.
Things, too, were there of curious mould,
That deeds of ancient story told ;

Could we but get them i' the Castle,¹
 Auld Nick himsel' might for them whistle !

XIII.

O'erlooking where the witches met,
 Before the warder's place, were set
 A band that swelling measures play'd,
 And wild yet mellow music made ;
 At last the echoing bagpipes² quell'd
 All softer sounds and loudly yell'd ;
 For Satan now, to waken mirth,
 Amang the gather'd guests cam' forth,
 Proposed a dance, and named a tune :
 The carlins made them ready soon.
 The youngsters first the game began,
 And through the glidin' movements ran ;
 Whiles danced their lord and master wi' them ;
 Whiles on a sudden did he lea' them,
 And whiles, like Jullien, waved sublime
 His royal rod to keep the time ;
 For after a', to be the Deil,
 He seem'd a social, hamely chiel',
 O' body strang and limbs o' might,
 But rough wi' hair as black as night.³

¹ In the castle of Newcastle-upon-Tyne are deposited the various antiquities in possession of the Society of Antiquaries. The Roman remains, found on the Stations along the Wall, are very numerous, and form a collection the most extensive in Britain.

² Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, the friend of Sir Walter Scott, in his excellent Prefatory Notice to LAW's *Memorials*, p. lxxiii, observes, "The bagpipe itself seems to have been a favourite instrument with the devil." BURNS, also, in *Tam o' Shanter*, says that Auld Nick

"Screw'd the pipes and gart them skirl
 Till roof and rafters a' did dirl."

³ "He was a meikle, blak, roch (rough, hairy, hirsute) man, werie cold." —*Isobell Gowdie*.

Then ithers caper'd to the strains,
 As wanton bluid had fill'd their veins,
 And lent new life to ilka spauld ;
 Even lamiters grew fresh and yauld :
 Aroused alike, by emulation,
 To gain their leader's approbation,
 They snapp'd their fingers, bounding high,
 And skirl'd again wi' perfect joy.

XIV.

There was an Antic 'mang them a',
 As queer a thing as e'er you saw,
 That served maist faithfully its master,
 And acted often as his jester ;
 For it was o' the royal band.
 A flag it carried in its hand,
 Border'd wi' red, the colour green,
 Whereon were pictured things obscene.
 To vacant places whiles it gaed,
 And wondrous sport the being made ;
 High as the dancer's heads it loupit,
 And o'er and o'er its creels it coupit,¹
 While, to observe its droll grimaces,
 The witches hoved wi' laughin' faces,
 And slacken'd by degrees their speed.
 Then Kate, observin' a', took heed
 Of a grave female 'mid the rest,
 Scarcely like Meg o' Meldon dress'd,
 But wi' her visage, shape, and air—
 Her form erect—her clustering hair ;

¹ Performed somersaults.

In costly habit was she seen,
 And stately as a royal queen.
 Now ceased the laggin' dance at last,
 When a black herald bray'd a blast
 Wi' brazen trump amid the crowd,
 And by command proclaim'd aloud :—
 “A race, a race ! Ilk ane maun fettle
 Her steed wha means to try its mettle,
 And at the startin' point appear ;
 We're ready now—the way is clear ;
 The rider o' the fleetest horse
 That gallops twice around the course,
 And first comes in, may justly claim
 A prize that's worth the carryin' hame.”—

xv.

The tiny grooms the horses brought,
 And hers Kate Ridley quickly sought ;
 A whip was lent her by a deil
 Wha fixed a spur on ilka heel.
 And there was Grizzie close beside,
 But Tib her besom couldna ride :
 Amang them cam' the being little,
 As bold as brass, and rade fu' kittle
 A skeleton ance form'd a sow,
 Whase e'en appear'd like fire to glow.
 There, too, were Nell frae Branshaw Peel,
 Wi' auld Peg Dunn o' Garretshiel' ;
 Ane rade a black, lang-luggit slowhound,
 The ither Robin Douglas' greyhound ;
 And several mair in ridin' gear
 Up to the startin' post drew near.

Abune them Satan waved his hand ;
 Then might they rin fu' quick on land ;
 But frae the number, sooth to say,
 The pow'r to flee was taen away,
 Till won an' endit was the race ;
 Then each press'd on to take her place,
 Wi' utmost ardour, wile, and art,
 Wishin' that she might get the start,
 And gie the rest a backward cast ;
 Syne off in speed they set at last.

XVI.

When once the circling course they rounded
 Applause on every side resounded ;
 Peg headed by a length the rest,
 Then Grizzie on her closely press'd.
 At last Nell's slowhound scamper'd by ;
 Then Kate her cutting lash did ply,
 For jockey-like her naig she rade him,
 And bluidy sides indeed she made him ;
 The bridle-reins she, girnin', twang'd,
 While on his hands an' feet he spang'd,
 And aye at ilka twitch he drew
 His breath mair quick an' swifter flew.
 Still aged Peg, for Kate did tent her,
 Cam' bounding onward close ahint her ;
 Her bare red cloak aye flaff'd an' flappit,
 Her stick the greyhound's quarters rappit :
 Syne onward swept they like the wind ;
 The ither racers lagg'd behind.
 And then cam' on the Antic queer,
 Whase horse o' banes, on drawing near

To Kate, was rattlin' wi' the race ;
 The flag it flourish'd at her face,
 Tryin' our heroine to bambouze,
 An' strove her cap an' hair to touzle.
 But Kate, determined to be first,
 Although her courser's heart should burst,
 Strain'd every nerve, and, by a span,
 Before them a' the honours wan.

XVII.

Soon as the plaudits round had ceased,
 And Kate alighted frae her beast,
 Cam' to her witches two or three,
 And led her on wi' mickle glee
 Away across the circling green
 Where Clooty 'mang his folk was seen.
 There sat the matron, by her look,
 Whom Kate for Meg o' Meldon took,
 But soon she halted when she came
 Before the coy and prudent dame.
 A little packet she received ;
 That coin was in't she scarce believed,
 But hoped there was, and, bending low,
 Without a word her thanks did show.
 Her horse the groom did onward bring
 Up to the centre of the ring ;
 Around him danced the Antic birky,
 Like the Deil's sel', baith sly an' quirky ;
 Syne on his back it gambols made,
 And mimick'd Kate when she him rade ;
 But when Auld Nick at leisure saw
 The gallant steed that beat them a',

Forward he cam' in courteous guise,
 And, viewing him wi' some surprise,
 Recall'd a wight he knew again,
 And thus he sp̄oke in mirthfu' strain :—

XVIII.

“ My worthy friend, ye're welcome hither,
 We canna meet owre oft together ;
 I'm glad to see you look sae weel ;
 How does his Honour, decent chiel' ?
 This night his bounty should content us ;
 The money for our race he sent us.
 He ever was a generous man ;
 An ye wad search Northumberlan'
 Ye wadna find this very minute
 A better hearted landlord in it.
 Wha but himsel', when times get bad
 An' tenants puir are unco sad,
 Will gie them back, frae off the rent,
 As much as they require per cent ?
 Ye ken too, when, wi' craps misgiein',
 Wet, backward hairssts, an' cattle deein',
 The bodies whiles were in a swither,
 He has forgien them't a'together.
 And then, again, when they grow vaunty,
 Wi' markets guid an' money plenty,
 He wad as sun'e think o' a halter
 As raise a rent or tenant alter ;
 Hence ilka farm he has they mend on't ;
 My sang ! they'll a' be independent !
 He and yoursel' are just the pride
 And boast o' a' the country side ;

Dispersin' blessings far and near,
 Ye grow in favour ilka year,
 And hearty thanks and gratitude
 Are daily yours for doing guid
 To them, wha, without your assistance,
 Can hardly waigle through existence.
 Lang may ye baith to puir folk be
 The blithest sight that e'er they see ;
 Aye fu' your purse, an' kind your faces,
 Your bearing bland wi' gifts and graces ;
 And when at last arrives the day
 That he and you are taen away,
 The tenants true, a' solace spurning,
 Will find what cause they hae for mourning.
 But then wi' me, without exception,
 Ye'se get frae a' a warm reception—
 A place prepared for a' sic gentry
 Wha honour baith their kind an' country."—

XIX.

Kate's horse was not like Balaam's ass ;
 He saw and heard, but let it pass ;
 For not a syllable he spak',
 Nor prudent Kate her silence brak' ;
 Though much she wonder'd at the speech,
 Its meaning was beyond her reach :
 And still o'er a' the unknown prize
 She held was precious in her eyes,
 While, save for breaking o' the spell,
 Much long'd she to inspect it well.
 But now a board o' plenteous fare
 And viands fresh was furnish'd there—

A sumptuous banquet—every thing—
 Meat, pastry, wine had sair'd a king :
 The guests sat down to better cheer
 Than they had tasted mony a year.
 Behind where ilka ane was seated,
 A ready imp as servant waited,¹
 Wha brought, or in a moment granted,
 Whate'er the cravin' carlin wanted.
 A' broodin' ills, wi' care an' sorrow,
 Frae them were banish'd till to-morrow :
 They feasted blithely, drank an' leugh,
 Pleased to observe mair than eneugh
 Of a' their langin' hearts were able
 To wish for, piled upon the table.

xx.

Meantime, to grace the jovial feast,
 The varying music never ceased ;
 For it would dwindle soft and low,
 Or like a gliding streamlet flow,
 And then rush on in volume strong,
 Winding and quavering loud and long.
 An interval at last took place,
 While, to employ the vacant space,
 The Antic creature, bent on mirth,
 All ready mounted, now cam' forth,
 Prepared, witch-like, aloft to fly,
 And spurr'd its palfrey to the sky.
 Above the lights it floated round,
 And on the rickley steed did bound,

¹ "Ther is threttein persones in ilk Coeven, and ilk on of vs has an sprir to wait wpon ws quhau we pleas to call wpon him."—*Isobell Gowdie*.

Where, like a *skilfu'* mountebank,
 It soon accomplished mony a prank ;
 And, changing oft in form and shape,
 It danced like Blondin on his rape,
 Waving the flag, till, all amazed,
 The hale assembly upward gazed.
 Once more descending to the green,
 On Kate the urchin bent its een ;
 Through honour to her doff'd its cap,
 And down *frae* gussie's riggin' lap ;
 Syne ask'd our heroine o' her case—
 Why she refused to take a place
 Amang her comrades at the board ?
 But Kate would answer not a word.
 Then did it sue and beg fu' sair
 That she would please to taste the fare,
 Or drink o' wine a single cup,
 And to the table just sit up.
 Still cautious, Kate remain'd aloof ;
 To a' temptation she was proof—
 Ill hint to eat or drink repell'd,
 But like a vice the prize she held.

xxi.

Needs not at length to dwell upon
 What follow'd when the feast was done—
 How off *frae* them wha langest tarried
 The victuals dish by dish were carried
 Away by fleein', monstrous things
 That shook the air wi' clangin' wings ;
 How the queer Antic still perforce
 Play'd pranks on Kate's bewilder'd horse ;

How carlins went to the churchyard¹
 To get their impious charms prepared,
 Crossin' the burn by Satan's skill²
 That they might act their deeds of ill.
 As they commenced, their chief in state,
 Upon the southern transept sat,
 And at their operations lookit ;
 His fiends like howlets round him flockit,
 Bearing aloft a torch fu' bright
 That low'd like ony fisher's light.
 Beneath was mony a cantrip cast,
 And curses mutter'd stern and vast :
 O' bairns unborn the bluid they shared,
 And ointments mix'd and salves prepared ;
 Black wax aboon a fire they warm'd,
 And, 'mid their incantations, form'd
 Wee images, wi' base intent,
 O' them they wanted to torment.³
 Dark mystic knots wi' spells they wove
 To cherish hate or baffle love ;
 Mischief to brew 'tween man and wife—
 To spread disease and shorten life.

¹ "Dowglas, and I myself, met in the *Kirk-yard of Nairn*, and ve rained an unchristened child owt of its greaff," &c.—*Isobell Goudie*. The said kirk-yard occupies a small rising ground, close to the north-east side of the Nairn river, so that being at a short distance from the town, and within half a mile of the sea, it must have been very lonely in the time of Charles II.

² "A running stream they daurna cross."—*BURNS*.

³ "Of this unsaney pictures aft she makes
 Of ony ane she hates—and gars expire
 With slow and racking pains afore a fire."

RAMSAY.

"His picture made in wax, and gently molten
 By a blue fire kindled with dead men's eyes,
 Will waste him by degrees."

The Witch, by MIDDLETON.

XXII.

But Kate was now in fear an' dread :
A sudden change the lift o'erspread ;
For when the hellish rites began,
Half-out, the lights burn'd blue and wan ;
The stars their stations left on high
And flew like meteors through the sky ;
The moon, new-rising i' the east,
Cower'd back again o'er Darden's crest ;
Down frae the heavens red blood a shower
Drop-crimson'd earth and tree and bower.
Still stood the rinnin' gurglin' brook ;
High Cheviot to its centre shook ;
A league the sea wi' troubled roar
Fled backward frae Northumbria's shore ;
Hoarse quaked the ground 'neath ilka tread,
And groans re-echoed frae the dead.
The mountains bellow'd through their caves ;
Like hungry lions yawn'd the graves ;
Hale troops o' ghosts glared down an' growl'd ;
Their steeds, the winds, in terror howl'd.
But when the wicked pranks did cease,
Auld Nature seem'd again at peace ;
For morning now, with radiant eye,
Was climbing up the eastern sky ;
And though she had not chased the night,
The hags again prepared for flight.
Their monarch o'er and o'er did bless them,
And vow'd a' ill should ever miss them ;
A parting brimfu' cup he gae them,
And order'd a' their horses to them.

XXIII.

Expressin' thanks maist warm and gratefu',
 The carlins wish'd him aye a statefu'
 O' faithfu' subjects, bauld and strang,
 To back his cause through right or wrang ;
 Then on their naigs themsel's they cast,
 And sought their several hames at last.
 Grizzie was there her horse advancing,
 And Tib upon her besom prancing ;
 Nell, too, and Peg ; but not so Kate,
 For wi' the lave she wadna mate ;
 Nor gat she blessing frae the Deil,
 Nor tongue she moved to wish him weel ;
 But safe the powerfu' ring she fand ;
 The packet firm was in her hand.
 She wi' the ither held her steed,
 When the queer imp in utmost speed,
 Wi' birr that proved it was nae joke,
 Flew at her like a bantling¹ cock—
 Dash'd at her features bauld and keen,
 An' did its best to blind her een ;
 Then seized the hand in which she clinch'd
 The pose, and ilka finger wrench'd
 To pick it forth ; but Kate in rage
 Sae fiercely did the thing engage,
 That by an awkward, loundering skelp
 She beat it off and made it yelp.
 O'ermatching thus its fiendish guile,
 And mounting on her naig the while,
 They rose upon the morning wind,
 O'er Harwood flew, nor look'd behind.

¹ *Bantling*—bantam.

Before her in the early light,
 She saw the crags on Rothley height,
 And Wansbeck wind through woods away,
 And Shaftoe's rocky summit gray.
 She mark'd at length her horse's hame ;
 But as she near the dwelling came,
 Sudden she felt a thrill of awe
 Mingled wi' wonder when she saw
 The wight himsel'—the man before her,
 That through the air she thought had bore her,
 And wham, for seasons lang, she kenn'd—
 Tam Jenkyn at his ain house end !

xxiv.

Nae doubt but in her fleein' state,
 Surprise had nearly ruin'd Kate :
 At sight o' Tam her heart sae flutter'd
 She almost "God hae mercy" utter'd ;
 And had the sacred words been spoken,
 The spell, by magic form'd, was broken—
 Down to the earth had she been toss'd,
 Her enterprise and labour lost ;
 But Kate fu' wisely held her breath
 Close as the prize, nor met wi' skaith.
 In at the lattice went her steed ;
 She drew the bridle frae his head,
 Upturn'd his visage to her view,
 And knavish Dick, the steward, knew !
 Back thro' the opening did she spring,
 An' down the burn, like bird on wing ;
 The shaggy copse did partly screen her ;
 Yet fley'd she was that Tam had seen her.

Now she caught glimpses here and there
Of the thin, viewless forms of air,
That, from the moment we are born,
Hover around us night and morn,
And, watchfu' aye, defend us still
From wicked wile or deed of ill.
Onward to Meldon straight she press'd,
Nor wad she take a moment's rest
To see her prize, what it contain'd,
Till Meldon gate at last she gain'd.
The house was like a second hame ;
Within she gaed and saw the Dame,
Wha, laughing, eyed her as she spak',
And gae her kindly welcome back :
Poor thing, her heart beat free once more
Whene'er she trod the well-known floor.

xxv.

Frae off her hand the ring was drawn,
The prize sae firmly held was shown ;
Her face was wash'd in water clear,
And she partook of breakfast cheer.
Within the packet all enroll'd
Were current coin of ruddy gold,
That chiefly bore the fair impress
Of Harry Eighth and good Queen Bess :
They were a welcome sight to Kate ;
She view'd them a' wi' heart elate.
Meg show'd her then the landlord's note,
And scarce a word his hand had wrote
But by some violence had been torn ;
The paper all was cramp'd an' worn :

It matter'd not, for Kate had run
The course by which her point she won.
And now her frame required repose,
Her eyes, fatigued, did almost close,
And though the sun was shining bright,
She sank to slumber soft and light :
Like summer cloud full soon it pass'd,
And she arose refresh'd at last ;
Thanks to the mistress now she tender'd,
And gratitude an' duty render'd ;
Syne hame wi' lightsome heart she gaed,
And Jack a happy husband made.
She mention'd not what she had seen,
Nor how successfu' she had been ;
Yet opportunely by her aid
The rent and ither debts were paid.
Soon Jack laid farming a' aside,
Yet Kate remain'd his joy an' pride,
While ever faithfu' did she prove,
Deservin' o' his trust and love.

xxvi.

Afar in Padua on the night
That Kate sae venturous took her flight,
The landlord safe his coffers kept,
And, deeming all secure, he slept ;
But when the sun at morning shone
The locks were fast—the money gone :
A goodly portion still was left,
Yet sore he fretted at the theft,
And thought aright that magic wile
Had robb'd him of his gold the while ;

The very pieces red and bright
Were paid to Kate ere dawn'd the light.
Frae Jenkyn's house the steward fled,
And lay for several days abed
In downright terror, night an' day,
The Deil would wi' him flee awa' ;
Nor scarcely dared draw on his breeches
For fear o' demon imps an' witches ;
But altered not his evil course,
And punish'd poor folk warse an' warse,
Till death capsized the churlish knave,
And not a mourner view'd his grave.
Lastly, our Kate believed it best
To lock the secret in her breast ;
Sir Edward Coke—the King himsel'
Aye dreaded witchcraft waur than hell,
And had she simply given it breath
Her doom had been a shamefu' death ;
Yet oft, as years went gliding by,
She deem'd some guardian, from on high,
Through that strange night had lent her force,
And placed her on the proper horse ;
Then smiles would brighten up her face
As she again recall'd the race,
Where, closely run, she proved the winner,
And had the luck to skin the Skinner.



Poems.



ENGLAND.

Belovéd England, we who live in thee
May prize thee not, but when we look around
On other countries, thou art like the star
Sparkling on morning's forehead, that foretells
A coming day of freedom to mankind !

THIS LITTLE POEM,
PRIVATELY PRINTED IN MDCCCLVI.,
AND INSCRIBED TO
THE LATE
MISS WATSON
OF
MILLFIELD HOUSE,
IS NOW DEDICATED TO HER MEMORY,
SHE BEING
THE BEST AND MOST GENEROUS FRIEND
THE AUTHOR EVER HAD.

ENGLAND.

FAIR England, may one draught be mine
From out the fountain gushing free
That once inspired thy bards divine
When they began to sing of thee !
And while thy features I survey,
Or muse on all thy boundless fame,
Would that my simple earnest lay
Were worthy of thine honour'd name !

Within thy bounds I was not born,
But when a child I could descry
Thy northern barrier rising stern—
Old Cheviot soaring to the sky :
And since I came to dwell in thee,
Amid thy wilds and meadows green,
Long years are gone, yet thou to me
Hast like a kindly mother been.

Glittering beneath their skies of blue
How clear thy winding rivers run ;
Thy lowly dales how fair to view,
Expanding to the summer sun :

Or leading to some airy height
How sweet thine uplands stretch away,
When blushing deep in golden light
At lovely morn or closing day !

Thine is that sweeping, spacious plain,
And how delightful to the sight
Its fertile fields of growing grain,
With hedges hid in blossom white,
And shady trees on every side
Far mingling to the distant sky—
The oak in beauty spreading wide,
The dark green poplar towering high !

There scatter'd far from stream to hill
Thy rural dwellings bright appear—
The scenes of joyful transport still,
Of feelings and affections dear,
Where woman most attractive seems,
For there as mother, maid, or wife,
Her gentle spirit sheds its beams
Like sunshine o'er domestic life.

Beside yon spot of rising ground
The smiling village glances forth,
Whence faintly comes the varied sound
Of sportive children in their mirth.
I see the church-tower worn and gray
O'er other earthly objects rise,
Whose taper'd spire each passing day
Points like an index to the skies.

I mark o'er yonder sylvan shades
The stately mansion standing fair
'Mid opening lawns and sunny glades
Where flower and shrub perfume the air.
The gleaming lake embower'd in wood—
The beauty of its lucent stream
Winding through nooks of solitude,
Might realize a poet's dream.

If to thy shores we turn our eyes,
Adjoining many a shelter'd bay
We see thy marts commodious rise
And public streets extending gay.
More distant still we may behold,
Far scatter'd o'er the billowy tide,
And amply fraught with wealth untold,
Thy ships innumerable ride.

Full throbs mine ardent breast to learn
That in each sea throughout the world
Surrounding nations may discern
Aloft thy naval flag unfurl'd.
So while above the ocean wide
Thou dost maintain supreme command,
Thy meanest son has cause of pride
That he was born in such a land !

The blood within thy people's veins
Their ancient warlike lineage shows,
Which all its former force retains
And with renewing freshness flows :

Brave is the tide as when of old
It urged to flight the arrowy shower
That with effect so deadly told
At Cressy and at Agincourt.

The battles which on sea were won
With Nelson let our annals tell ;
And those on land with Wellington
Re-echo to thy praise as well.
On Alma's heights who led the van ?
Or, nobler still, what battle field
May vie with that of Inkermann,
Where British valour last was seal'd ?

Thy dauntless sons this spirit nerves
All rude aggression to withstand,
And hence thy name their zeal preserves
Inviolate on sea or land.
Thy standard floats triumphantly
O'er climes that earliest hail the light ;
And regions homage yield to thee
Where latest fall the shades of night.

Yea, every time our clocks declare
Another hour has sped away,
Day's early radiance, bright and fair,
Breaks on some fortress in thy sway.
Thus, echoing to the bugle's sound,
O'er bristling wall and rampart borne,
Thy martial airs the earth around
Salute the ever-rising morn !

O'erlooking far thy fertile plains,
Thy goodly towns in all their pride,
Thy fair retreats and broad domains,
Thy ports of trade and commerce wide,
Thy city homes like palaces,
Thy gallant fleets on shore or sea,
Who may declare the worth of these,
Or name the wealth that is in thee?

Still, it is not for countless gold,
Nor thy possessions vast and rare,
Thou hast upon my heart the hold,
Or that I deem and call thee fair.
In temperate or in torrid zone,
On mountain dark or district tame,
'Tis loftiest intellect alone
Which consecrates a land to fame.

And thou, though powerful be thy might,
And famous thy renown in war,
Thy love of truth and what is right
Hath made thee greater, nobler far;
And if for arts and arms combined
Thou art unequall'd 'neath the sun,
Yet through thy sovereignty of mind
More lasting conquests have been won!

It was in thee that Bacon first
Would o'er the realms of science gaze,
Till on his vision order burst
And beauty from confusion's maze.

A later brother, Newton, turn'd
From out thy bowers his upward eye
To span the sparkling lights that burn'd
In silent glory through the sky.

Who with sagacious look descried
In every portion of our frame
How circling flows the crimson tide ?
Thy Harvey here acquired his fame.
By ardour strung, thy Davy sought
The depths of nature to explore,
And trophies thence more wondrous brought
Than mortal ever dream'd before.

So Stephenson, by native force
Of rare inventive skill, design'd
The mighty, matchless Iron Horse
That bears us swifter than the wind :
By toil untired, obeying time,
It speeds along from sea to sea,
Telling aloud o'er every clime
A stirring tale of thine and thee !

Of rulers sage thou hast had those
Who, influenced by honest zeal,
Despite of frowns or subtle foes,
Were all-devoted to thy weal
And such with grateful feelings yet
We cherish in remembrance due—
Great Alfred can thy sons forget,
Or cease to value worth so true ?

When danger came thy yeoman brave,
The firm sagacious Cromwell rose ;
In purpose prompt, o'er land and wave
He hurl'd destruction on thy foes.
Thy name beloved o'er Europe wide
He raised to greatness and renown ;
The bigot's rage he turn'd aside—
The pontiff shrunk beneath his frown.

Yet not without the cost of blood
Thy liberties have been obtain'd ;
Defying death, thy patriots stood
Till these in triumph they had gain'd.
And now our vessel of the state
All self-adjusting seems sublime
As through the breeze or storm elate
She breasts the rolling waves of time.

Those still before us we would keep,
For round them our affection clings,
Who dug thy history's sources deep
And open'd up its living springs.
Yea, are not Hall and Holinshed
Like flowing rills meand'ring free
To slake the thirst of those who read
What formerly occur'd in thee ?

Still later pens attract the sight,
And some our gratitude engage :
Who hath not hung with fond delight
O'er Hallam or Macaulay's page ?

Around their brows thy chaplets twine,
 Whose close research and labours lone
 Have left us in unbroken line
 A mirror'd view of ages gone !

Nor let the merits be forgot
 Of those who, with unwearied mind,
 The annals of thy counties wrote,
 And to that point their aims confined.
 Yon noble pile did Surtees rear !
 That column tells of Hodgson's fame !
 These fair memorial spires appear
 On front inscribed with Hunter's name !

And where may they, thy bards, be found—
 Our poets true, a brilliant throng,
 Who to the harp's responsive sound
 Awoke the ever-welcome song;
 Whose strains through all succeeding time
 Will prove thy splendour and thy pride ?
 In fancy's eye with forms sublime
 I see them rising side by side !

Mark noble Chaucer seated high—
 The laurel on his brow how green !
 And Spenser mild with glowing eye
 As he beheld the "Faerie Queene" !
 Lo, Shakspeare waves his magic wand
 And looks around on heaven and earth:
 Of all thine intellectual band
 A mightier spirit ne'er had birth !

See stately Milton near him there ;
Exalted ever be his fame :
'Mid darkness, evil days, and care,
He nobly won a matchless name !
Others around are crowding near,
Each worthy in his own degree ;
And rarely shall a class appear
More honouring or ennobling thee !

What joy it were thy bounds to trace—
To gaze thy classic scenery o'er—
To muse and linger near each place
Hallow'd by genius or by lore ;
To note the landscapes they have seen,
The letter'd few we love the best ;
To pace the soil where they have been,
And look upon their beds of rest !

Yet if their haunts I may not tread,
The pleasure unalloy'd be mine
Their thoughts—their very words to read,
And ponder o'er them line by line :
I am not dazzled by the blaze
Of lofty Greece or mighty Rome ;
But I would calmly round me gaze,
And equal merit find at home.

Oh, where is he with gentle mien
Who sought the felon's loathsome cell,
And strove that in such narrow scene
More cheerful might the captive dwell ?

On mercy thus thy Howard went
To melt with love the hardest heart ;
He seem'd on holy mission sent,
Performing here an angel's part.

Again our cordial meed of love
To thy revered divines be given,
Who to the SAVIOUR point above—
The lonely pilgrim's way to heaven.
What thoughts will Hooker oft inspire ;
How Barrow's line impressive flows ;
With all his sparks of mental fire,
What sacred warmth in Taylor glows !

And thus by each enlightening band,
Divine, philanthropist, or sage,
A generous influence o'er thy land
Has onward spread from age to age :
Progressive be its movement still !
The boon is thine to succour grief ;
The maim'd can have thy ablest skill,
The wretch in penury relief :

Yet these are like the upland rills
That wander to a broader stream
Whose limpid wave the channel fills
Till earth and sky within it gleam.
A better period is to come ;
The reign of selfishness must cease ;
Contention shall at last be dumb,
And men will cherish love and peace.

We see when war thou dost proclaim,
What treasures thou canst lavish there !
Then go—pursue a brighter aim ;
The pangs of human suffering spare.
Arrange that all upon thy soil—
Man, woman, boy, or girl obscure,
Who strive to live by honest toil,
Have comfort and subsistence sure.

Besides, impress on every mind
What schools propose to teach, and more—
The principles by **HIM** design'd
Who came our lustre to restore.
Raise knowledge to its proper sphere
That evil things may pass away,
And righteousness unfeign'd appear
Resplendent as the morn of May.

Thy freedom shared by high and low,
For which our sires have nobly striven,
With open, liberal hand bestow
On every people under heaven :
In all that brings true virtue forth
Or tends to elevate our race
Through each division of the earth,
Take thou the chief, the leading place !

We know the kindness of thy heart
In charity's unbounded field :
Against affliction's ruthless dart
Thou wouldest present a covering shield ;

Where want and misery prevail
 Thine aid unsought is ever near ;
 And thou to sorrow's plaintive tale
 Art pitying as a woman's tear.

Consoling throbs of sympathy
 Hast thou to fallen greatness shown ;
 And monarchs find a home in thee,
 Expell'd from kingdoms once their own.
 Away beneath far distant skies,
 Where waters flow or forests wave,
 A beacon art thou to the wise—
 A land of promise to the slave !

How, England, hast thou gain'd that height ?
 The POWER that governs earth and heaven,
 Sitting enthroned in purest light,
 To thee hath all thy glory given.
 Thy brave HE framed to chase away
 The darksome night of tyranny,
 Till rose o'er thee in perfect day
 The blissful sun of LIBERTY.

And nourish'd by its genial beams,
 Like boldly branching oak, the mind
 Array'd in freshest foliage seems
 To drink the dew and woo the wind :
 O ever o'er us shine that light,
 Imparting joy to hearts forlorn ;
 The harbinger of visions bright—
 The hope of ages yet unborn !

Dear land, I cannot draw aside
The veil that shrouds thy future years ;
Yet if misfortune thee betide
I will regard it through my tears.
Should traitors dare to do thee wrong,
O sharp and swift their exit be !
Thou art and ever shalt be strong
Defended by the good and free !

Be weakness from thy courts removed,
That round the throne alert may stand,
In council with our Queen beloved,
The wise, the faithful of the land.
Nor let thy safety as a die
In idle reckless game be thrown :
The means of moral healing lie
Within resources all thine own !

I live in hope and faith sincere,
On looking down the tide of time,
And musing on thy bright career,
Thou hast not yet attain'd thy prime :
Arrive it will in future days
When men from despot-bonds are free,
That every wind must waft thy praise—
A grateful world shall reverence thee !

SCOTLAND.

WHERE heath-clad mountains, towering steep,
Rise proudly to the sky ;
Where winding valleys, dark and deep,
'Mid hills unnumber'd lie ;
Where wave green woods of stately pine
And streams are sweeping free,
I call that rugged country mine—
'Tis there where I would be !

Nor distant, mark on every side
O'er bank and level plain,
Her fertile fields extending wide,
And fill'd with waving grain.
How choice the sight, how sweet the air !
For hedges rise between,
Whose balmy blossoms, bright and fair,
O'ertop the lively green.

There welcome spring comes gently forth
'Mid lambs and opening flowers ;
And laughing summer fills with mirth
The lonely forest bowers :

There autumn 'mid her yellow corn
Salutes the reaper band ;
And larks awake each merry morn—
Ay, that's my native land !

And there, by brake and echoing glen,
The humble homes look forth
Of Scotland's brave and virtuous men—
Her treasure and her worth.
Though train'd to toil, no nobler throng
Exists o'er land or sea ;
The highest place they hold among
The faithful and the free.

And maids are there bright as the dew
That gems the budding thorn—
More fresh than flowers of fairest hue,
And lovely as the morn ;
Whose bosoms tuned to purest love,
And sway'd by impulse high,
Are kind and bounteous far above
What countless gold can buy.

No marvel that her minstrels true
Across the lyre have flung
Their tuneful hands with reverence due,
And strains impassion'd sung.
Her beauty was the fountain whence
Their inspiration came,
Whose names and noble lyrics hence
Are syllabled by fame.

And thus it is the thousand rills
That stray her wilds among—
Her opening glades—her dark brown hills
Gleam in the light of SONG.
O'er upland waste or barren moor
It sheds delight and mirth ;
It cheers the lowliest cottage door—
It glads the humblest hearth.

Yea, hail to Song ! its spirit wakes
To life the human mind ;
The poorest truthful man it makes
An honour to his kind :
Exalting every grateful sense,
And soothing passion strong—
O, who may tell the influence
Of Scotland's wondrous Song !

But there are strains of holier note
That every eve and morn
From out her numerous dwellings float,
On wings of zephyr borne ;
And kneeling at her altars bend
Both man and maiden fair,
While pour'd from earnest hearts ascend
The solemn sounds of prayer.

Here is of vital strength the source :
A wise and watchful land
That holds with heaven such intercourse
Will ever steadfast stand.

And this, in living lines of gold,
May Scotland well avow :
It proved her stay in days of old,
And is her glory now.

Still other objects passing dear
Unite more close the band
By which, devoted, I revere
Old Scotia's honour'd strand.
Mine eyes, were I among her vales,
Would fill with joyous tears,
To ponder o'er her stirring tales
And deeds of former years.

She seems a memorable stage
Where men have pass'd away
Who were the noblest of their age,
The brightest of their day.
A magic interest yet, we feel,
Invests the soil they trod,
Who dared from human law appeal
To conscience and to God.

In brave defence of freedom's claim
She ever foremost stood ;
Nor fail'd, when sound of battle came,
To shed her dearest blood.
The trophies that her people bold
From wanton power have wrung,
Should be by every patriot told,
By every poet sung !

Point me a moor or silent glen
 Throughout her limits wide,
 Where, for the sacred rights of men,
 Her children have not died !
 Nor is there wimpling streamlet sweet,
 But winds with wistful wave,
 In wailing tone or murmurs meet
 Around some martyr's grave !

Say, has that vale which sleeps in light,
 Or yonder mountain high,
 Ne'er gleam'd in noble Bruce's sight,
 Nor shone in Wallace' eye ?
 And look again—our fathers stern
 Came forth with spear and shield,
 Our proudest privilege to earn
 On yonder battle-field !

Shall I then lightly think upon
 Those hallow'd spots of earth ?
 A realm more worthy there is none
 Than that which gave me birth :—
 No clime where love of liberty
 And genius burns more bright ;
 The land of sweetest melody—
 Of inward life and light !

As seeks the little weaning child
 To share its mother's breast—
 As turns the youth with fervour mild
 To her he loves the best ;

So, Scotland, would I have my home
Where blow thy breezes free :
I feel my heart, where'er I roam,
O'erflow with love to thee !

EPISTLE

TO

MR. JAMES TELFER,¹

SAUGHTREE, LIDDESDALE.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
12th Sept. 1848.

LONG life, my worthy friend, to thee !
Ah, many a summer sun has set,
And time hath told on you and me,
Since we at first together met.
Should I, in rhyme, attempt to trace
What we were then and what are now,
The trial may at least efface
A shade of sadness from thy brow.

¹ Died 18th January, 1862.

We murmur'd not, though both were poor ;
 For seated in some nook of earth,
 Or wandering on o'er field or moor,
 Our hearts were light and full of mirth.
 Life's conflict caused us no annoy,
 Nor did its toils our ardour tame ;
 We deem'd the world had store of joy,
 That paths before us led to fame.

I will not say the aim was ours
 The Poet's wreath to win and wear :
 Untried our skill, untrain'd our powers,
 Compared with bards we valued dear ;
 Yet from the witchery of song
 It seem'd unmanly to refrain,
 And, did we prosper in the throng,
 We might a slender chaplet gain.

Well I remember when, by turns,
 We onward read and relish'd high
 The soul-inspiring verse of Burns—
 The Ettrick Shepherd's minstrelsy.
 Sir Walter's bold, heroic lyre
 Evoked at once our warmest praise ;
 And full we felt the force and fire
 Of Byron's powerful, thrilling lays.

Advancing farther 'mid the store
 That England's tuneful sons bequeathed,
 O what would charm our fancy more
 Than con the lines which Shakspeare breathed ?

O'er Chaucer and o'er Spenser's strain
 With lively eye and ear we hung ;
 Nor could we view or list in vain
 The deathless pieces Milton sung.

Through lonely glen or gloomy bower
 The path of life before us lay ;
 While shone the sun or fell the shower
 We each pursued a devious way.
 Our love of lore we cherish'd still,
 And well each other's course we knew :
 The autumn sear or winter chill
 Could not dissever hearts so true.

Then thou didst choose a lowly spot
 Where Liddel's limpid waters glide ;
 And mildly bore thy humble lot
 Aloof from empty pomp and pride.
 Thy books beloved were prized as wealth ;
 But ills successive press'd on thee—
 The languor of declining health,
 And iron gripe of poverty.

Struggling with these, how vain the hope
 To scale the rugged steep of Fame !
 O, who against them both may cope,
 And leave behind an honour'd name?¹—

¹ On the supposition that if any one of our great poets, MILTON for instance, had sprung from poor parents who were unable to give him educa-

Still there were times when visions bright
Arose enchanting on thy view—
Imagination robed in light
Her choicest scenes before thee drew.

Myself—amid the ceaseless hum
And press of business I was cast ;
Scarce could I think on what might come,
Or pause to ponder o'er the past.
And thus, while time and seasons fled,
With pliant will and active frame,
I firmly strove to earn my bread,
And waive the waking dream of fame.

Still, I was not without delight ;
At home my favourites round me lay,
Whose converse I enjoy'd at night,
Which braced my bosom through the day—

tion, and that the youth thereby had to follow the same mode of procuring food and clothing that his father pursued, could he possibly have attained the high position which, under brighter auspices, he actually achieved ? Would he have burst the barrier which confined him, and is it likely he could have produced the mental wealth which has come down to us as a rich inheritance ; or had he passed through life, known only to those around him as a shrewd, clear-headed, large-hearted, practical business-man ? Again, would Shakespeare have written his Plays had he not been connected with the Theatre ; or would Scott have thrown off his Novels had he not been a partner in the printing business with the Ballantynes ? Much depends on external circumstances. The young tree, however strong and vigorous it may be by nature, attains its full growth not only because it is rooted in good soil, but also on account of the light, warmth, and genial air around it ; nor is it the worse of the free winds of heaven kissing its foliage, and singing or whistling at times among its branches.

True friends with which I would not part
Without a pang, a painful tear ;
Even as the blood that warms my heart,
I love and hold them ever dear.

And then the sheet with matter fill'd
By each alternately was sent ;
Thus, during leisure, when we will'd,
Our rising thoughts had ample vent.
Addressing thee, how swift the pen,
Progressive, ran o'er every line !
And when thou didst reply again,
An intellectual feast was mine.

While summer robed in colours gay,
To autumn's mellow hue gave place,
Long look'd I for the coming day
When thou would'st meet me face to face.
Then as we roved, discoursing free
On all we saw and felt and knew,
What truth was in thy words to me,
How quick the lengthen'd evening flew !

Now of our life more than the space
Of forty years is fled away ;
The dark lines deepen on each face ;
Our hair is partly mix'd with gray.
Privations on us both have told ;
For trials we have felt and seen
That sear the heart and leave it cold—
We are not now what we have been.

In fair achievement of renown
Thou art successful more than I ;
The tale, the ballad is thine own
That cannot, will not quickly die.
Perchance, I have not touch'd in vain
The lyre that echoed to my hand,
When I essay'd a simple strain
In honour of my native land.

Here it is mine to feel regret :
Our choicest bards have nobly won
By numerous lays their laurels—yet
How very little we have done !
To them no envy, I confess,
Nor blighting wish I ever bore—
I would not they had triumph'd less,
But that we had accomplish'd more.

Again, those studies have enshrined
Within ourselves a spirit new :
Joy meets us in the passing wind,
Beauty attracts us in the dew ;
The morn inspires us with delight,
Dawning on hill and valley green ;
There is a loveliness in night
That else I know we had not seen.

A humanizing glow we feel
O'er all the grades of human life ;
We would promote our country's weal,
Remove complaint, abandon strife :

The gush of female sympathy,
The tender look that bids farewell,
Love's dimpling smile and touching sigh
Are more to us than words can tell.

And though the haughty, cold and mute,
In seeming splendour pass us by,
We know the parts that constitute
Superior worth and majesty.
The honest man, unsway'd by pride,
Who to the lowly succour brings,
Hath in his veins a nobler tide
Than that which is the boast of kings.

Come then, my friend, with steady eye,
Upon our journey let us fare ;
Resolved to keep by purpose high,
Nor be the dupes of earthly care.
Till o'er us fall the closing night,
Be ours to wield the potent wand,
And mark the beautiful, the bright,
In fancy's radiant fairy-land !

Or while from these we rest retired,
Let us enjoy with grateful mind
The rich bequests of those inspired
To elevate and teach mankind ;
And long be spared our energy
To trace, on history's brightest page,
The struggles that for liberty
Have been maintain'd from age to age.

But if the Muse should o'er us smile,
 May we the happy hour improve ;
O, be her blandishments the while
 A source to us of joy and love !
Angelic maid ! she caught our eye
 By magic wile when we were young,
So onward, to our parting sigh,
 In sweetest notes her praise be sung.

Farewell ! would every coming year
 With purest bliss augment thy store,
And yield thee all thou valuest dear,
 Methinks I scarce could wish for more.
The fatal shaft by which we part,
 O, be it late and distant thrown !
A brother art thou of my heart—
 The friend whom I have longest known.

ROBERT WHITE.

EPISTLE
TO
CAPT. CHARLES GRAY, R.M.,¹
EDINBURGH.

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,
25th January, 1850.

My valued friend, shall months depart,
Or seasons pass in fleeting train,
And I not once, to glad my heart,
Receive a note from thee again ?
To mark thy hand, to break the seal,
To read thy ever-welcome line,
The impulse of thy thoughts to feel,
What elevating joy is mine !

He² who hath as a brother proved
In every part to you and me—
Whom, as yourself, I ever loved,
He told me saddening news of thee :

¹ The author of "Lays and Lyrics," printed at Edinburgh in 1841.

² Mr. Patrick Maxwell, who wrote a memoir of Miss Blamire and notes to her "Poetical Works," published in Edinburgh, 1842.

He said that illness, lingering slow,
Had almost quench'd thy ardour high ;
And that thy pulse was often low,
While sunk and cloudy seem'd thine eye.

Alas ! that e'er thy outward frame
Should feel the blight of dull decay ;
Or spirit, touch'd with heavenly flame,
Were cabin'd in a mould of clay !
Thou, who with due regard to BURNS,
Hast knelt his hallow'd shrine before ;
And on thy shoulders had by turns
The mantle that the poet wore.

Yes, thou hast with a hand of skill
Flung freely from the sounding lyre
Sweet warblings forth, o'er dale and hill,
That will not with thyself expire—
Convivial strains to banish care
From lowly hearths when nights are long,
That so the meanest hind may share
The social luxury of song.

His praise for ever sounded be
Who centres energy in rhyme,
By which the heart will beat more free,
And brisker glide the lapse of time !
It opens pleasures to the mind,
It gives to better feelings birth,
And points to all of human kind
The beauty both of heaven and earth.

The Bard is Nature's minister ;
Her wondrous influence he feels ;
And all, through homage due to her,
The magic of his art reveals :
Rapt with her charms on soaring wing,
And led by fancy unconfined,
His bosom chords responsie ring
Like harp-strings to the passing wind.

On such a sacred mission sent,
Life's choicest garlands thus to cull,
No wonder that, in calm content,
Thy cup of joy is often full.
For while the glow of happiness
To all around thou dost impart,
We may not well conceive the bliss
That lightens up thy loving heart.

Pleasure, unmingle, thou hast felt
In other lays beside thine own ;
What song that may the bosom melt,
But to thine eye and ear is known !
Each rill of Scottish melody
Up to its source thou hast explored ;
And all our tales of chivalry
Are in thy recollection stored.

A welcome glance, a ready hand
Open as day, in thee unite ;
Nor poet lives throughout the land,
But who would hail thee with delight.

Even he¹ across the western sea,
Who meekly bears an honour'd name,
A warm admirer found in thee,
Desirous to promote his fame.

Who doubts thy taste may cast his eye
Upon the wealth thou hast acquired—
The works of men renown'd and high,
By genius or by worth inspired ;
And 'mid them all, a favour'd throng
Arranged in order may be seen—
The volumes of those sons of song
Whose laurels flourish ever green.

I thought my own collection choice ;
For I had glean'd from year to year
What bards had left whose tuneful voice
Resounded thence in accents dear ;
Yet hearing of thy plenteous store,
I found my zeal outdone by thine ;
And I did but rejoice the more
To know thou wert a friend of mine.

Nor is it only by the pen
Thy blooming chaplet thou hast won ;
Among her noted martial men
Our country claims thee as her son.

¹ Mr. Hew Ainalie, who has resided for a long period in America. The lyrics and ballads in his "Pilgrimage to the Land of Burns" prove him to be one of the gifted sons of song.

Upon the deck, against her foes,
Long hast thou swept the ocean wave,
Prepared in hostile strife to close,
And stand or perish with the brave.

Yet while thy veering vessel rode
By many a famed, romantic shore,
Where glorious men of old abode,
And brilliant deeds were done of yore,
If former scenes thou didst recall,
The features of a northern strand
More dear to thee would seem than all,
Because it was thy fatherland.

Ay, Scotia well deserves thy love,
And since again thy lot has been
Across her lonely wilds to rove,
Or linger in her dales of green,
The aspirations of my heart
Shall wing their upward way to heaven,
That length of days—a goodly part—
To thee may yet be freely given.

O, had I leisure at command,
I would rejoice, along with thee,
To scale the mountains of our land,
And all her scenes of grandeur see ;
To mark her glens and valleys deep,
Where rills descend in sparkling sheen,
And watch her noble rivers sweep
By waving forests dark and green.

Through battle-fields would lie our course,
And o'er them we would pondering stray
To conjure up the foot and horse
In all their gallant, stern array :—
The onset fierce we wculd suppose—
Could see the lines together run,
And hear at last the shout that rose
To tell the dubious palm was won.

But O, how welcome to our sight
The holy haunts of classic ground,
By living lays array'd in light,
Where we would stand and gaze around !
Such spots to us would far surpass
All other landscapes smiling fair ;
For reverently we must confess
The spell of genius triumphs there.

I trust, my friend, thou shalt arise
In health to hail the jocund spring,
When genial gales and sunny skies
Make flowers appear and linnets sing.
Morn through thy frame shall strength infuse—
Her balm around thee she will spread ;
And slumber's mild refreshing dews
At night upon thy couch be shed.

Hence, I will not the hope forego,
Ere long to meet thee face to face ;
With those whom I am proud to know,
Thou dost maintain a sacred place.

Too soon, alas ! the prized, the good,
The tender and the true depart ;
While o'er their loss we sorrowing brood
In widow'd loneliness of heart.

Still, as we see the spreading oak
Amid the forest rear its form,
Unshiver'd by the thunder stroke,
Unbroken by the sweeping storm ;
Even so among thy comrades dear,
Long cherish'd, may'st thou firmly stand ;
And prove to be each passing year
An honour to thy native land.¹

ROBERT WHITE.

¹ On this point the wishes of the author were not realized. Captain Gray, being confined to his bed at the time when the epistle was written, died some time afterwards.

REFLECTIONS OF AN ENGLISH PEASANT.

[I was induced to write this poem from an impression that the great majority of our labouring population are disposed to think far too meanly both of themselves and the pursuits they follow in order to obtain subsistence. I would, if possible, convince them that daily exertion in an honest calling is, in the sight of all true men, highly honourable, since on the numbers who are thus occupied depend the strength and security of our native land.]

IT stood upon a streamlet's side,
The little cot where I was born ;
Around were meadows stretching wide,
And scatter'd fields of growing corn.
Before the door our garden lay ;
Three stately beeches round it grew,
Which in the sultry summer day
Their cooling shadow o'er us threw.

My father ever felt a pride
To do his daily labour well :
The furrow straightly could he guide ;
Before his scythe the herbage fell.

Ere dawn'd the morning's mellow light,
My mother plied her spinning wheel,
And every day, till late at night,
Herself she busied for our weal.

One only sister, young and dear,
With two loved brothers less than I,
Around the hearth, year after year,
Grew up beneath our parents' eye.
We pluck'd around us many a flower ;
Where berries grew we all could tell ;
Each wavy pool and summer bower
Do I, even yet, remember well.

The morn is on my memory yet
When first to school I trudged along :
With dew the springing grass was wet ;
Aloft, the skylark trill'd his song.
Directly in the master's sight,
I musing sat with downcast eye :
Alas ! I felt not that delight
I had beneath the open sky !

And if I came to take my share,
With other boys, in good or ill,
Although my tasks I conn'd with care,
I was a child of freedom still.
The hour was ever dear to me
When we had leave again to roam ;
Then light of heart as bird on tree
I wander'd at my leisure home.

The evening was a joyful time ;
For oft beside my father's knee
I listen'd to some olden rhyme
He would repeat to us with glee.
The lively fire so cheerful beam'd
On smiling faces round our hearth,
I thought that little circle seem'd
The most attractive one on earth.

My date of boyhood scarce was by
When I could first a sickle wield ;
So I resolved my skill to try
Upon a distant harvest-field.
My bosom, when the road I took,
Grew sadder than it used to be ;
For I observed my mother look
Behind me far as she could see.

I would not nature's throbs repress,
But dried the tears and sped away ;
The struggle in my breast grew less
As busier scenes around me lay.
A spirit true, a willing hand,
Methinks I never urged in vain ;
And 'mid the toiling reaper-band
I bravely could my place maintain.

Years flew, and other objects fair
Arose enticing on my sight :—
Sweet beauty with her modest air,
Her witching form, her eye of light.

O tell me not of human bliss,
Nor speak of rapture from above,
If I must not include the kiss
Of virtuous and devoted love !

My Mary came, a timid girl
Of gentle bearing, coy and meek ;
Yet grace appear'd in every curl
That dangled on her dimpling cheek.
Like marble was her polish'd brow ;
Her bland expression seem'd divine ;
I, unresisting, pledged my vow
Upon her faith, and made her mine.

Reluctantly, my father's cot
I quitted like a bashful boy ;
The world's entanglement could not
My earlier feelings all destroy :
Nor to a distance did I wend,
For every morn I might descry,
Above his roof, the smoke ascend
In fleecy windings to the sky.

I hither came as time progress'd,
And numerous trials I have borne ;
Out of the friends I loved the best
A number from my heart are torn.
Above my sister's lowly bed
I've seen the wither'd herbage wave ;
And unavailing tears I shed
On my belovéd mother's grave.

One brother sail'd to lands afar,
Whence I have never learn'd his fate ;
The other fell in vengeful war,
Leaving a widow desolate.
Yet heaven has spared my children three ;
My loving wife is by my side ;
My aged father lives with me,
Whom I regard with filial pride.

We have not plenty at our will ;
Yet nature's slight demands are few :
A frugal board and slumber still
The vigour of our frames renew.
When morning smiles, from out our lips
The praises of our God are told ;
And so again as evening tips
The hills around with glowing gold.

The hallow'd Sabbath is our own,
When we indeed have joy and rest,
A day, wherever God is known,
Confiding christians love the best.
Amid the desert, toiling still
O'er barren rock and burning sand,
It is to us like Pisgah hill,
Whence we may view the promised land.

Our lowly church is passing fair ;
How sweet the music of its bell !
No marvel, in the house of prayer,
That Israel's singer loved to dwell.

Beneath its roof each mouldering stone,
Each seat around me I revere ;
For I can say,—“In ages gone
My sires devoutly worshipp'd here.”

Beside its font of antique form,
For simple grace and beauty prized,
Was I, upon the pastor's arm,
In helpless infancy baptized.
Before the altar did I stand,
And I recall the day with pride,
When I received my Mary's hand
As, blushing, she became my bride.

I cannot pass the old church-yard
With scatter'd tomb-stones standing round,
And grassy graves, but I regard
The lonely place as sacred ground.
Within its narrow limits lie
The humble race whence I arose ;
And I expect, when I may die,
To find beside their dust repose.

They tell me that did I aspire
Beyond my present lowly sphere,
More ample means I might acquire
Than fortune will afford me here :
Such may have been, I will allow,
By following out a bolder plan ;
Yet my unchanging wish is now
To live and die an honest man.

Meantime I ought not to o'erlook
The homely pleasures I enjoy:
With social talk or tempting book,
My vacant hours I can employ.
What Shakspeare in his wisdom wrote—
What Milton sang in strains divine—
These fertilizing streams of thought,
For ever flowing, all are mine !

At jocund morn, around my bed,
Flows in the precious light of day ;
The lofty sun at noon will shed
His kindly radiance o'er my way :
With step more soft than falling dew
Comes bending o'er me gentle night,
Clad in her robe of deepest blue,
Spangled with stars of living light.

'Tis mine to list, when skies are calm,
A thousand little warblers sing ;
The air I breathe is pure as balm
Borne on the moorland zephyr's wing.
A well, beneath whose daisied brink
The growing cresses green appear,
In ample volume yields me drink,
And sparkles like the diamond clear.

In Britain's weal I have a voice,
Although obscure my lot may be ;
For in her greatness I rejoice
And love to see her children free.

Nor with obsequious, low pretence
Need I before a monarch bend :
My cottage is a castle, whence
My rights and life I can defend.

I am of those whose strength has made
Our country first in skill and fame :
A titled few may grow and fade ;
The people ever are the same.
But let our aims be pure and high
Above the sordid lust for gold—
O'er sea and land dispensing joy,
And blessings shall be ours untold.

However England's power increase,
We are the sinews of the soil,
Her force in war, her worth in peace,
Ready by night or day to toil.
It is by our assent and will
The Queen in safety wears the crown ;
And if she show us kindness, still
She steps not from her station down.

Proud may I be that such a land,
So highly favour'd, gave me birth :
I often deem her circling strand
Includes the brightest spots on earth.
Her hold upon me I can feel
By ties that death shall only break ;
And could my life advance her weal,
I'd yield it freely for her sake.

Be firm, my heart—elate, my head ;
If poor, no abject serf am I :
For liberty my fathers bled,
And I like them shall live or die.
With eye of love, though circumspect,
All human nature I would scan ;
Adopt the good, the bad reject,
And stamp on every act the MAN.

THE CONTRAST.

ADDRESSED TO A YOUNG FRIEND.



I REJOICE that though a youth,
Thou art searching after truth ;
And on men, in various ways,
'Warding blame, bestowing praise.
Many, sprung from noble blood,
Truly virtuous are and good ;
Some among the poor are base—
A dishonour to their race.

Of the lofty, as we pass,
Mark the meanest of the class !
Of the humble, in our quest,
Let us now select the best :
Two are come before us here,
And if thou wilt lend thine ear,
What in them is sound or weak,
I shall thereof plainly speak.

One is rich, and if he stray
Round the country or away,
In his gliding chariot clean,
He is like a monarch seen.
Warm his coat and shining vest ;
Horses, harness of the best ;
Servants waiting on his call ;
Lacking nought, enjoying all.

Note the other,—poor is he,
Busy kept as slave can be,
Toiling on at cart or plough,
Working every minute through.
Much his homely garb is worn,
Partly patch'd but nothing torn ;
On his face are lines of care ;
Hands are hard and body spare.

See the one his home within
Snugly seated, free of din ;
Every comfort in the land,
At his will he may command.

Gorgeous pictures hang around ;
Softest sofas there are found ;
Curtains by the windows glow ;
Beds are down with sheets like snow.

When the other can retire,
Wearied, to his little fire,
Coarse and scanty is his food,
Though he deem it passing good.
Seats are hard, his bones are sore ;
Yet hath he delight in store :
See his children round his knee,
Partner blithe as she can be !

One, o'er hills and valleys gay,
Holds an undisputed sway ;
Grassy meadow, fertile field,
To him all their produce yield.
Still with these he doth desire
Other acres to acquire :
All that fortune may impart
Cannot glut his greedy heart.

Spot of land beneath the sun
Never hath the other won—
Never will, until at last
He is where the weary rest.
Yet while o'er him bends the sky,
He can hail the day with joy ;
Air and light are his secure ;
Water to him gushes pure.

One assumes position high
From an honour'd ancestry ;
Proud if no plebeian blood
Mingled in it since the flood ;
Seeing not that acts betray
Unto all, as clear as day,
Whether pure the tide doth flow,
If the line be high or low.

But the other, conscious how,
That by toil of hand and brow,
With unfailing health to speed,
His poor fathers won their bread,
Trusts that like them he may be
Known for truth and honesty :
Firm by these he shall abide ;
There consists his chiefest pride.

One supports a titled name ;
Still he thirsts for higher fame,
Not like that which, soon or late,
Crowns the truly good and great ;
But to show, with fair pretence,
Vast is his magnificence ;
Glorying in the words that sprung
From a worthless monarch's tongue.

See the other halting not
If he may his weal promote ;
Yet desirous; day by day,
Every man his own to pay ;

Food and clothing to provide
For the youngsters by his side ;
Trusting that he may them see
Active men and women be.

Mark, with grasping hand the one
Always taking, giving none ;
Discontented with his store,
Striving still to make it more,
As if change would never come,
And the world were all his home ;
Nor believed a brighter sky
Hung beyond his gazing eye.

For the other, he is kind ;
Of an open, generous mind ;
Duly rendering thanks to heaven
For unnumber'd blessings given :
Seeing life but like a flower
That may wither in an hour ;
And, beyond this narrow strand,
Looking for a better land.

One, observe him, if you please,
Never wholly is at ease ;
Fearing lest, some future day,
What he has shall waste away :
Careful thence, he ever strains,
That, by law, his hoarded gains
Make his own posterity
Rich through all futurity.

Then the other feels he must
On the bounteous Giver trust ;
Nor will vainly fret himself,
Evermore amassing pelf ;
But would have his children learn
Good and evil to discern,
That they may, endow'd by grace,
Fly the last, the first embrace.

To the one, abundantly,
Learning's fountain gushes free :
Open to him are the scrolls
History to mankind unrolls.
He can Latin read and Greek ;
Of religion too can speak,
Though its spirit, whole or part,
Scarcely thaws his callous heart.

To the other, learning's tide
Has from boyhood been denied ;
Narrow are his means, and more
Circumscribed his range of lore ;
Yet the scriptures are a prize,
Giving him to realize
He will through the Saviour be
Heir of immortality.

By each one of human form
There are duties to perform ;
And we must not hope to rest,
But be doing still our best.

Now, on those depicted here
Exercise your judgment clear ;
And, when both you freely scan,
Say which is THE BETTER MAN ?

THE HIGHLAND EMIGRANT.

I.

IN early spring, when sharp winds coldly blew
Among the Scottish hills, a simple swain
His homely tartan plaid around him threw,
And southward went, descending to the plain.
Year after year he had essay'd to gain
An honest livelihood with frugal care ;
But finding all his skill and efforts vain,
He sought to cross the ocean, and repair
To the far West a plot of forest land to share.

II.

Only himself of all his line was left.
In early life his loving parents died ;
A brother sank, and next he was bereft
Of two fair sisters, with his gentle bride :

They had grown up and gamboll'd by his side,
 When life brought happiness and hope was high :
 His other early friends were scatter'd wide ;
 And as he drew the port of Greenock nigh,
 Reflecting on the past, he often heaved a sigh.

III.

Poor man ! 'midst faces never seen before,
 Uncouth he seem'd upon the open street,
 And all untaught of the world's busy lore ;
 Yet for a space he found a still retreat :
 Here his warm heart with love of country beat,
 For in his breast were finest feelings strung ;
 And while his treasuring memory linger'd sweet
 On each familiar place he prized when young,
 These earnest accents flow'd spontaneous from his
 tongue :—

IV.

“ Scotland, within thy bosom valleys dark
 And heathy mountains met my youthful view :
 I ever joy'd to trace thy wilds, and mark
 The majesty of nature as she drew
 Each wild and varied scene, and changed her hue
 With each returning season ; yet the wind
 Of adverse fortune on me keenly blew ;
 So now, a weary wanderer, I must find
 My way to climes remote, and leave thy glens behind.

V.

“ Still, Scotland, still I love thee, and my love
 Glows warmer as my footsteps leave thy shore ;

Thy towering hills will rear their heads above
The forests which surround them, dark or hoar,
Piercing the sky, and wintry storms will roar
And fiercely howl upon them ; yet for me,
I shall behold thy rugged wilds no more
Except in slumbers when I dream of thee
In regions far remote, beyond the heaving sea.

VI.

“ I had desired to linger and contend
With stern misfortune rather than to stray
To other realms,—I could have wish’d to spend
My years where dwelt my fathers, and then lay
My bones in death beside them to decay
And rot with kindred dust. Now this is past ;
I mark the ship that bears me far away,
Scotland, from thee, and quickly I shall cast
Upon thy hills a look—the dearest and the last.

VII.

“ Though other skies be milder, though the breeze
Convey from spicy groves their rich perfume,
Though ripen’d fruit drop mellow from the trees,
And variegated flowers, successive, bloom
In endless beauty, will my heart resume,
Far from my native soil, its wonted tone ?
It cannot be ; yet still, though sunk in gloom,
Be mine to muse on pleasure past and gone,
Till I at length shall rest, forgotten and unknown.

VIII.

“ Dear land, if prayers for thee avail in heaven,
Among the nations thou thy head shalt raise ;
Blessings unnumber’d will to thee be given ;
Thy worth and virtue shall elicit praise
From all around thee, and thy poets’ lays
Will spread to every shore thine honest fame !
So I have confidence, in future days,
Thy gallant sons will by their deeds proclaim
That they are sprung from thee, and worthy of thy
name.”—

IX.

Such were the patriotic thoughts that rose,
Thrilling the bosom of the mountaineer ;
And brief the time allow’d him for repose ;
He went on board, and in an evening clear
The vessel sail’d from all he valued dear :
Fair blew the wind, and when the morning shone
He could discover, through a moistening tear,
The western heights of Scotland, blue and lone :
At length ’neath ocean’s verge they faded and were
gone.

X.

Away he sped across the pathless deep,
Pondering on every spot he left behind ;
Gaily before the breeze the ship would sweep,
The seamen’s joyous laugh was unconfined.
New York they reach’d, and Evan felt inclined,
Without due rest, to hasten on his way ;
His pulse grew feverish, and the cooling wind

Could not the heat upon his brow allay ;
Then on a stranger's couch for weeks he lingering lay.

XI.

Recovery still seem'd doubtful, when there fell
A Highland piper's music on his ear :
He listen'd to the notes he loved so well ;
He mark'd the wanderer's kilt and bonnet dear :
The sound and sight were more than he could bear,
For they recall'd his native land again ;
And fancying that her hills and heaths were near,
Such the commotion in his heart and brain,
His spirit pass'd away as sank th' o'erpowering strain.

XII.

Alas ! that landed men should drive afar
From lovely Scotland, o'er the ocean tide,
Those who might prove her firmest stay in war,
Or constitute, in peace, her chiefest pride !
Still, let us not too hastily decide :—
A people, warm'd by virtue's noble flame,
May spread heroic vigour far and wide,
And, mindful of their former country's fame,
Give to some other clime a truly honour'd name !

OTTERBURNE.

[These stanzas and the next short poem are among the author's earliest attempts at writing verse. This will account for any imperfection in them which may be detected by the critical reader.]

HAIL to thy pleasant banks, fair Otterburne !
The sweetest rill that feeds the winding Rede ;
Thy limpid waters o'er the pebbles mourn,
Meand'ring gently through the verdant mead.

The modest daisy, wet with morning dew,
Wild, scatter'd on thy brink, neglected grows ;
The early primrose, deck'd in richest hue,
Upon thy verdant banks serenely blows.

The herald lark with pleasure hails each morn,
And carols loudly, free of toil or care,
While numerous songsters, warbling in the thorn,
With rapture and with music fill the air.

How sweet, at evening mild, alone to stray,
And list amid thy glades the blackbird sing,
Or the loved mavis boldly tune its lay,
Making each shady nook with gladness ring !

In days of old, high o'er thy dimpling tide,
 Arose in stateliness thy massive tower,
 Whose banner o'er the turrets waving wide
 Proclaim'd defiance to the Scottish power.

Lo ! yonder Douglas led his gallant band
 Against brave Hotspur of illustrious fame,
 And tamed the valour of Northumberland,
 But fell as victory enshrined his name.

North from the Stone¹ was struck the bloody fight :
 Ah ! many a dauntless warrior there was slain !
 Helmet and shield gleam'd in the clear moonlight,
 While death stalk'd ghastly o'er the crimson'd plain !

Hence was the subject sounded by the lyre ;
 And such the strains our early minstrels sung
 That Sidney's bosom kindled at their fire—
 Yea o'er the world their echoes since have rung !

Thus unto me thou art for ever dear,
 Renown'd by arms and poet's thrilling lay ;
 Even bards in future times shall thee revere ;
 Thy fame and glory cannot pass away.

Thy people now no voice of war alarms ;
 The sounding martial horn is heard no more :
 Thy uplands glisten not with shining arms ;
 For peace hath hush'd to rest thy smiling shore.

¹ Battle stone. See the author's *History of the Battle*, p. xix.

Instead of threat'ning towers, or bulwarks strong,
The hall or lowly cottage charms the eye ;
No dreaded ruffian lurks thy wilds among,
Nor ruthless foe with murd'ring steel is nigh.

Yet soon the time may come when from thy bowers
A sad and lonely wanderer I shall be ;
Ah, then, through life will I the happy hours
With joy remember I have spent in thee !

1821

TO A DAISY.

ON SEEING ONE IN THE EARLY PART OF SPRING.

How couldst thou venture forth, sweet flower,
Or trust thy slender form
To Boreas' sharp and sleety shower—
The biting frost and storm ?

The piercing winds yet howl along
The darken'd, gloomy sky ;
Or frowning tempests, fierce and strong,
In wild confusion fly.

Its lovely charms thy breast displays
To Phœbus' languid beam :
Alas ! at best his brightest rays
Yield but a transient gleam.

Thy stem no sheltering banks or trees
Protect in lofty pride ;
Thou bloom'st exposed to every breeze
That sweeps the mountain side.

Fair floweret, thou an emblem art
Of damsel young and free,
Who bears, unmoved, a cheerful heart
In midst of poverty.

Though struggling in a world of strife,
She joyful seems the while ;
The ceaseless cares of humble life
May not repress her smile.

But, hoping still for brighter days,
She looks to **HIM** above—
Sweet object, worthy of our praise,
Deserving of our love !

And thou dost, on that narrow spot,
The poor man represent,
Who meekly, in his humble lot,
Is evermore content.

Though worn and bent by early toil,
And much in lack of gold,

He would not once his honour soil
For store of wealth untold.

Afar, within the country wide,
And nigh some limpid well,
Where air is pure and streamlets glide,
He loves remote to dwell.

And there, where seldom human feet
Approach his lone abode,
He holds at will communion sweet
With nature and with God.

1822.

GOING HOME

O MARY, be thy look unmoved,
And gently calm thy throbbing heart :
From youth we have each other loved ;
But we must for a season part.
Thou know'st the lot has long been mine
A weary wanderer here to roam,
So neither murmur nor repine—
I'm on my way, and going home !

Full many a day, from early morn
 Till late at eve, on hill and plain,
 Unceasing hardship I have borne,
 Exposed to cold and piercing rain.
 Yet seated side by side with thee,
 Our cot was dear as lordly dome ;
 For thou didst make it seem to me
 The emblem of a heavenly home.

Man's inhumanity I've felt,
 And writhed beneath a villain's guile :
 Though poor myself, my heart would melt
 To see a wretch in want the while.
 Severe the numerous ills of life,
 Yet to an end at last they come :
 And I am done with care and strife—
 Beloved, I only journey home !

Our little children—oh ! a thrill
 I often feel of aching pain—
 For sake of them I would that still
 I were restored to health again.
 It may not be—this frame of clay
 Is sinking downward to the tomb ;
 Yet God will be their shield alway,
 And waft their father's spirit home.

O tell them, dearest, not to mourn,
 Nor pitch their place of safety here ;
 But look beyond this narrow bourn
 Unto a higher, purer sphere—

A realm of exquisite delight
 Where shade of woe shall never come :
 I have its blessed shores in sight,
 And thither am I going home.

This world is like a heaving sea,
 Exposed to every gale that blows ;
 Ourselves the mariners must be,
 Uncertain of an hour's repose.
 But in our LORD if we confide,
 Come wildest storm or darkest gloom,
 We have a sure and faithful guide,
 And with him do I journey home.

Who can declare the boundless love
 HE had for erring souls below,
 Leaving the throne of heaven above
 To drink the dregs of human woe ?
 For us HE yielded up his breath—
 The sinless in the sinner's room—
 That HE might burst the gates of death,
 And lead us to a joyful home !

Still more distinctly now I see
 Fair Zion's ever verdant bowers ;
 I can distinguish every tree
 That rises near her glittering towers ;
 And dazzling forms in fair array
 I mark upon her pathways roam :
 Mary, I wish to be away—
 My earnest spirit sighs for home !

I long in yonder fields to meet
The friends I loved so well before—
To hold with them communion sweet,
And be united as of yore ;
To share my mother's fond embrace—
To see my father forward come,
And give me welcome, face to face :—
What happiness to be at home !

O Mary, love, when I am gone,
For that bright land thyself prepare,
With these our children every one,
And we shall meet in rapture there,
Thenceforth to share unmixed joy,
Nor ever more asunder roam :
Our trust—our treasure is on high :—
Be reconciled—I'm going home !

A PARENT'S GRAVE.

[In approaching the last resting-place of a father or mother there is something peculiarly solemn and touching ; and I have ever regarded a visit of that kind as a lesson strongly tending to correct the errors and encourage the virtuous resolutions of human life.]

MAN, if exulting in thy power,
Thou speak'st of life's uncertain day
As though thy sky should never lower,
Nor strength or vigour fade away ;
While to the world and all its ways
Thou art an earnest, willing slave,
Restrain thy thoughts, and calmly gaze
On a beloved parent's grave.

If on the sea of commerce wide,
The breath of fortune's favouring gale
Augment thy stateliness and pride,
By filling fair thy crowded sail ;
And if thy bent of soul be given
To speed along such fickle wave,
Recall thyself, and think of heaven,
Or look upon a parent's grave.

If, dazzled with the view of gold,
 Its lustre set thy heart on fire ;
 And though it come in heaps untold,
 Still more and more thou dost require ;
 Nor can in all thy haste discern
 What folly 'tis such wealth to crave,
 A useful lesson may'st thou learn
 By musing on a parent's grave.

If thine should be a prosperous lot,
 And squalid want thou passest by,
 Nor deem'st, within the humble cot,
 That aught is worthy of thine eye,
 Not so the "man of sorrows" thought,
 Who came a guilty world to save !
 Go hence, and be thou better taught
 While pondering o'er a parent's grave.

If, goaded by ambition, thou
 Would'st climb the lofty steep of fame,
 And by the sweat of hand or brow
 Art toiling on to gild thy name,
 Thine is not health—the hectic glow
 Pervades in thee life's rushing wave :
 More temperate wisdom learn to know
 By pausing near a parent's grave.

If thou, when youthful years have fled,
 Art not in soul what thou should'st be,
 Though, when a child, thou bent thy head
 In prayer beside a mother's knee,

Her gentle hints, her words of love
On thy retentive heart engrave :
Resolve the future to improve,
And, wistful, mark thy parent's grave.

If with impressive tongue thy sire
Oft counsell'd thee at eve or morn
That thou to virtue should'st aspire,
And vice in all its aspects scorn,
Such noble aim pursue alway—
Support the lowly, aid the brave !
Life but admits of brief delay,
And points thee to a parent's grave,

THE TRAVELLER :

ON RETURNING TO ENGLAND.

I FEEL the glow of other days :
Give me my harp again,
That I, fair England, in thy praise
May wake a fitful strain.

Both east and west I've wander'd far ;
I've sail'd on every sea ;
Yet thou hast been my leading star,
I found no place like thee !

O land beloved, my early home ;
Thy charms I never knew,
Till, prompted by a wish to roam,
I cross'd the ocean blue.
But sunny sky and landscape bright
Small solace brought to me :
With faces round me dusk as night
I often thought of thee.

And O the kindling joy I felt
To list an English tongue !
My eyes unused to tears would melt
When songs of thee were sung :
They pictured to my longing mind
The dales I wish'd to see,
The happy hearths, the maidens kind,
The friends I left in thee.

Still onward did I wend my way :
In peace I could not rest ;
Yet change of scene did not allay
The ardour of my breast.
And when I proved all travel vain,
By land or surging sea,
I homeward bent my steps again
To live and die in thee !

Though genial were the climes I trod,
 I thought where I had been—
 Remembering all thy acres broad,
 Thy trees and hedges green ;
 Thy level tracts that stretch away
 Beyond where eye may see :
 Land of my heart, I'm proud to say
 No country is like thee !

Thou art to me enhanced beside,
 For bright as cloudless sun
 The beauty of the gentle bride
 Whom I in thee have won.
 Than all the wealth the world around,
 She is more dear to me :
 O where may hearts so true be found
 As those that beat in thee ?

Light dawns not on a realm more famed
 For all achievement high ;
 While genius has thy worth proclaim'd
 In words that cannot die.
 The stranger hails thy honour'd shore,
 "Home of the brave and free!"
 And shall not I, exulting more,
 All homage pay to thee !

Thine ancient towers, thy churches gray
 In hamlets rising sweet ;
 Thy humble roofs, thy dwellings gay,
 Where love and concord meet ;

Thy aged sires, thy daughters dear,
Thy children 'mid their glee ;
All—every object I revere
That thrilling tells of thee.

But, England, where thy mighty sleep,
Am I attracted there ;
So thither with emotion deep
I, pilgrim-like, repair :
The places where they lived and breathed
Shall ever hallow'd be,
Who a perpetual boon bequeath'd
Of mental wealth to thee !

O then be mine in quiet age,
Throughout the changing year,
With poet, patriot, and with sage,
To hold communion dear.
And when I wait the fatal blow
That sets my spirit free,
How soothing even at death to know
My dust shall rest with thee !

TO A FRIEND.

ON VISITING THE ROMAN WALL.

COME, bid adieu to fretful cares,
That creep upon us unawares ;
Be minor trifles from you cast,
And let us muse upon the past !
Here while we trace each ancient scene
Where Roman foot and eye have been,
That people, and their actions all,
Let us in pensive mood recall.

How rarely fraught the Roman mind—
What fancy and what force combined !
How apt to form, in outline free,
Gods shaping human destiny—
To people with ideal things
The forests lone, the gushing springs ;
And, deeming all it fashion'd true,
Regarded each with homage due !

Again, how active in his place
Each member of that wondrous race
How loving in domestic life,
Yet evermore prepared for strife !
Each nobler impulse well he knew ;
What power into his deeds he threw ;
How bold in mighty enterprise,
In war how brave, in peace how wise !

Behold, again, how acts of worth
Could draw his veneration forth ;
With deities he class'd the name
Of him who scaled the steep of fame,
Sever'd a fragment from the rock,
His story graved upon that block,
Shaping it in proportion fair,
Then all devoutly worshipp'd there.

Still farther—if a vow he made,
As he implored the gods for aid,
Again its head the altar rear'd,
The record on its front appear'd.
Destroying Time hath not effaced
From yonder stone the words he traced ;
Go, read them in the classic tongue
That Tully spoke and Virgil sung !

Or view him in the public cause :
How he obey'd his country's laws ;
To all her statutes true as steel,
He lived but for the common-weal.

With what persistence he pursued
Designs of matchless magnitude,
Rearing on plain and rising hill
Remains that are a marvel still !

Lo, where the Barrier holds its way,
Cresting the rock and mountain gray,
In ruin hoar, defying time,
Through all its range it seems sublime.
O, to have seen it when of old
It stood with all its turrets bold—
Its stations, castles towering high
In solemn grandeur to the sky !

Here have we ample scope for thought :
What energy the Roman brought
To execute such lines of strength,
Stretching from sea to sea in length !
Nor less the fabric tells of those,
The Britons rude, who were his foes ;
How powerful must have been their might,
How fierce and terrible in fight !

Now stand we on the ruin'd mound ;
Before us all is hallow'd ground !
You cannot raise a single sod
But there a martial Roman trod.
Here did he live, here cast his eye
Around on dale, on hill, and sky ;
Here mark in June the flowerets blow,
And shiver in December's snow.

Yes, where we are, he oft would prove
The garner'd wealth of woman's love ;
Bask in her smile, and happy be
To have his children round his knee ;
Remember, on his narrow hearth,
The sunny land that gave him birth ;
Or with an aching heart deplore
He never might behold it more !

Besides, with what prevailing art
He could his bent of mind impart
To those whom erst, in lands afar,
He met and overcame in war !
Mildly obedient to his will,
They bore his arms, acquired his skill ;
And, aliens though they were in name,
Upheld his honour and his fame.

Fortune was with him for a time,
And he enjoy'd her summer's prime ;
It lasted not :—a heavy doom
Impended o'er imperial Rome.
She who had seen her flag unfurl'd
O'er every region of the world,
Beheld, at last, her power decay,
And felt her sceptre pass away.

What were her crimes, and how she fell,
Gibbon's historic page will tell :
Enough for us if soon or late
Ourselves may shun such hapless fate.

But while her errors we disown,
Her virtues let us make our own ;
With lofty aim and purpose high,
Ennobled live—unshrinking die !

Much from the Roman was conceal'd
Which Heaven to us in love reveal'd :
O'er him were darkness, gloom, and death ;
Light from on high illumes our path.
The blessed ONE who came to save
Tells of a home beyond the grave,
Where with himself, in radiant bowers,
Immortal glory may be ours !

FREEDOM.

AROUSE ye from your slumbers,
Ye long-degraded men ;
Come on in swelling numbers
Down mountain-side and glen :
From each extending valley
Your bravest let us see,
When round our flag we rally,
Determin'd to be free.

Tears will not now avail us,
Nor supplicating words,
When fighting men assail us
With spears and glittering swords.
By thousands they are near us ;
Yet not dismay'd are we :
No obstacle must fear us
In striking to be free.

Let every son and daughter
Within our cherish'd land,
Prepared for strife or slaughter,
Sedate and ready stand.
And where, in the encounter,
The hottest press may be,
There shall we nobly venture
Our bosoms to be free !

Our altars are before us ;
So are our father's graves ;
And shall the sun shine o'er us—
A sneaking crowd of slaves ?
Long have our hopes been blighted ;
Now this be our decree :—
With heart and hand united,
We battle to be free.

Our blood, outpour'd, shall witness
The curse of foreign laws ;
And prove to heaven the fitness
And justice of our cause.

It boots not more to boast us ;
Yet here we all agree,
Whate'er the trial cost us,
To perish or be free !

MY CHILD :

AN INCIDENT IN THE WRECK OF THE "ROTHESAY CASTLE"
ON HER WAY FROM LIVERPOOL TO BEAUMARIS.

I.

THAT morning o'er the briny deep
We saw the whirlwinds fitful sweep ;
Red rose the sun, the darken'd sky
Proclaim'd to all a storm was nigh.
Upon the deck with troubled air,
I mark'd a mother, young and fair,
Embrace her infant, slumbering mild,
And low she sobb'd, " My child ! my child ! "

II.

The tempest came, the winds did rave :
High toppled round us wave on wave ;
Away in chase each swifter flew,
And whiter-maned and loftier grew.

Fearful it was to stand and spy
The drenching spray flung to the sky :
No hope the mother's heart beguiled ;
Weeping she sigh'd, " My child ! my child ! "

III.

The thunder peal'd, the lightning glanced ;
Our black and bulky vessel danced
Cork-like above the raging tide,
And, bounding, reel'd from side to side.
Bosoms that beat unmoved before,
With dread were heaving more and more :
The infant sweet look'd up and smiled ;
The mother moan'd, " My child ! my child ! "

IV.

We seem'd amid the strife a speck,
And then the waves rush'd o'er the deck :
All perish'd save myself, and I
Encounter'd death, but did not die.
The mother—what can match her love !—
Sinking herself she held above
Her head the babe—the waters wild
Choked in her mouth, " My child ! my child ! "

MY NATIVE LAND.

INSCRIBED TO MR. PATRICK MAXWELL.

FAIR Scotland, dear as life to me
Are thy majestic hills ;
And sweet as purest melody
The music of thy rills.
The wildest cairn, the darkest dell
Within thy rocky strand,
Possess o'er me a living spell,—
Thou art my native land !

I breathed in youth thy bracing air
For many a summer tide ;
And saw with joy thy valleys fair
Beneath me stretching wide.
Amid thy classic haunts I found
My glowing heart expand ;
For each to me was sacred ground,—
Mine own inspiring land !

Endear'd to me is every trace
Of what in thee hath been !
I prize each consecrated place,
Each thought-awakening scene.

I love thine ancient towers o'erthrown
By time's unsparing hand,
Where dwelt thy patriots of renown,
Thou independent land !

Loved country, when I muse upon
Thy dauntless men of old,
Whose swords in battle foremost shone
Beside thy Wallace bold,
And Bruce who, for our liberty,
Did England's sway withstand,
I glory I was born in thee,
My own ennobled land !

Ah, precious is the dust of those
Who, by such heroes led,
For sake of thee, against thy foes,
In fiercest conflict bled !
All unremember'd though they be,
With steadfast heart and hand
They sold their lives to make thee free,
Thou spirit-rousing land !

Nor less thy martyrs I revere,
Who spent their latest breath
To seal the cause they held so dear,
And conquer'd even in death :
Their graves proclaim o'er hill and plain,
No bigot's stern command
Shall mould the faith thy sons maintain,
My dear, devoted land !

And thou hast ties around my heart—
Attraction stronger still,—
The gifted poet's sacred art,
The minstrel's matchless skill :
Yea, every scene that Burns and Scott
Have touch'd, with magic hand,
Is in my sight a hallow'd spot,—
Mine own distinguish'd land !

Due-reverenced be thy bards each one
Whose lays of impulse deep,
Abroad upon the world have gone
Far as the wind may sweep.
Be mine to linger where they moved—
Where once they stood to stand,
And muse on all they knew and loved
In thy romantic land !

O, when I wander'd far from thee,
I saw thee in my dreams,—
I mark'd thy forests waving free—
I heard thy rushing streams ;
Thy mighty dead in life came forth ;
I knew the honour'd band :
We spoke of thee—thy fame—thy worth,—
Thou high-exalted land !

What feelings through my bosom rush
To hear thy favour'd name !
And when I breathe an ardent wish,
'Tis mingled with thy fame.

If prayer of mine prevail on high,
Thou shalt for ever stand
The noblest realm beneath the sky,
My dearly-cherish'd land !

1848.

STANZAS.

ON earth, my son, affection's ties
The fount of purest pleasures prove ;
Presume not therefore to despise
The throb of virtuous woman's love.

It may have been thy feelings young
Were on unworthy objects thrown ;
But one may live whose breast is strung
With chords responsive to thine own—

One who, if fortune smiled, and thou
Too eager sought ambition's track,
Would, as she soothed thy aching brow,
To solid wisdom woo thee back.

Or wert thou troubled, should the dart
Of calumny assail thy fame,
She, undismay'd, might nerve thy heart
Firmly to bear whatever came.

Devoted thus, she would employ,
In cheerful health or sad distress,
Her thoughts but to increase thy joy,
And make thy care and sorrow less.

Nor unrequited will she be,
For thou wouldest value love like this ;
Conscious that India's wealth to thee
Could not insure such lasting bliss.

'Tis said man's heart in single life
Becomes a sordid, selfish thing :
Let thine resemble, by a wife,
A garden in perpetual spring !

TO MARY.

MARY, now the spell is broken ;
Fate commands and we must part ;
Yet receive this little token,
Emblem of a constant heart.

When in distant lands I wander
Through each wild, romantic scene,
Thou at times perhaps wilt ponder
On the past and what hath been.

Then, in thrilling, warm emotion,
If thine eyes are cast on this,
It will tell of my devotion
And our cherish'd dream of bliss.

As the pole-star to the seaman
O'er the darken'd, heaving deep,
Even so, thou first of women,
Thee before me shall I keep !

Every morn when, upward wending,
Lightsome larks are singing free,
So my earnest prayers ascending
Shall be offered up for thee.

And again, when o'er the meadow
 Evening steals with sober air,
 As I kneel beneath its shadow,
 Thou shalt be remember'd there.

While apart from thee I tarry,
 Every week is like a year :
 Thou art ever, gentle Mary,
 All on earth I value dear !

1824.

TO A LADY,

ON HEARING HER PLAY UPON A PIANO.

I'VE known o'er sorrow's darkest hour
 Sweet music throw a gleam of bliss ;
 Yet never felt its magic power
 Shed gladness o'er my heart like this !

'Tis not the joy that peasants knew
 Of yore, when on some haunted green
 The fairies glided o'er the dew,
 And pour'd their notes from harps unseen.

I feel not that delight which thrills
The exile's heart when once the strain
He loved upon his native hills
Salutes his listening ear again.

But bland enjoyment, pure and calm,
Such as we hope to share above,
Steals o'er me, soft as evening's balm,
Awakening all my soul to love.

Life's sky of every cloud is free
That o'er my early years was cast ;
I look, unmoved, on what may be,
And view without regret the past.

Strange, that the mind should through the ear
Abstract from music's witching spell
The high resolve all ills to bear,
And battle with our trials well !

No more I'll think that care and woes
Unceasing shroud this barren land ;
But strive to be where strains like those
Are waked by such an angel's hand !

TO ELIZA.

BELIEVE me, maid, I cannot view
Those clustering ringlets loosely twine
Around thy neck of fairest hue,
Without the wish to call thee mine.

Like pilgrims to some hallow'd spot,
We wander through this passing scene ;
But, join'd to walk with thee, my lot
More blest would be than it has been.

Should the north wind of poverty
Upon our path blow chill and drear,
My arms around thee, thou wilt be
The blossom that it cannot sear.

Or, on our way, did fortune's sun
His warm and radiant splendour pour,
Amid profusion thou alone
Shalt ever be my loveliest flower.

At morn, my earliest wish to heaven,
As dew-drop pure, for thee should rise ;
My latest prayer, at close of even,
In thy behalf would reach the skies.

In health, the light to guide my steps,
 The sun of all my world be thou !
 In sickness, I would moist thy lips,
 And strive to cool thy burning brow.

Nor deem that strong affection's flame,
 As life declines, must die away ;
 Endear'd by time, 'twill burn the same,
 Though age shall turn our tresses gray.

And when our souls from earth are free,
 Death may not then our hearts divide ;
 As I would live, my hope will be
 In dust to slumber by thy side !

1829.

ADMONITION.

AWAKE, arise from out thy trance !
 Wouldst thou the prime of life employ
 In fondly dreaming woman's glance
 The only source of all thy joy ?

Fair is the maid thou lov'st—her form
 Surpasses far the reach of art ;

Her smile the breast of age would charm,
Her softness tame the roughest heart.

And all that nature's self hath given
Of grace or beauty to thine eyes,
Whether in earth, in sea, or heaven,
I know thy soul is form'd to prize.

But mark how honour's nobler aim
Incites the ardour of the free ;
And shall the poet's wreath of fame
Remain unwon, unsought by thee ?

To base supineness never yield !
Better it were thy limbs to brace,
And struggle in the listed field,
Or try the well-contested race :

Then, shouldst thou gain, 'tis passing well,
The boon is rare as that of kings ;
Or didst thou fail, the world might tell—
“ He died attempting glorious things !”

1830.

STANZAS.

FORSAKE thee ? No !—were all the gold
And pearl of both the Indies mine,
My mind were base, my heart were cold,
Did I abandon love like thine !

Friends came when blush'd my early day,
Nor did I once their suit deny ;
Yet one by one they shrunk away
As stormy clouds o'erspread my sky.

To thee I turn'd, and, sooth to tell !
I found thy youthful heart was true :
Thy tenderness, refreshing, fell
Upon my soul like vernal dew.

Revived, I learn'd to value not
The world's unmingleld scorn or praise ;
But calmly bore my hapless lot,
And forward look'd to better days.

Thou who amid this prospect drear,
Unchanged, to me didst fondly cling,
Shalt now, since brighter scenes appear,
Partake of all the joy they bring.

Did fortune's chaplet deck my brow,
Inlaid with gems and rubies rare,
'Twould be my highest pride that thou
Wert far the richest jewel there !

1832.

TO HELEN.

O BLAME me not although my tongue
My love for thee conceal'd :
Didst thou not witness proofs more strong
Than ever words reveal'd ?

Yea, oft hast thou, when I could hear
The music of thy tongue,
Observed how fond my willing ear
O'er every accent hung.

And thou hast seen the festive dance
Create no joy in me,
While other beauties caught my glance,
Till it reposed on thee.

When thou didst for a moment keep
My fingers clasp'd in thine,

Well mightst thou know the impulse deep
Thy hand produced on mine.

Or if thy lips, ripe tempting, I
In glowing ardour press'd,
This faithful heart, with throbings high,
To thee its flame confess'd.

Away with words,—they fail to prove
What these confirm so well—
The tokens true of deeper love
Than idle tongue may tell !

1832.

IMPROPTU.

Yes, I did feel my wayward lot
All fondly cherish'd hopes destroy ;
And thought the world a barren spot
Where man might scarcely taste of joy.
But finding thee, I fain would prove
What bliss to mortals may be given ;
For now I deem to me thy love
Would almost make this earth a heaven !

1832.

TO MARY.

Few hours have vanish'd since we met ;
Yet these have left so deep a spell
On me, that, Mary, I regret
To clasp thy hand and say—Farewell !

It is not love pervades my heart :
Ambition quench'd that fitful flame ;
But from the mind, unbidden, start
Thoughts that we cannot always tame.

And while thou lingerest thus with me,
I ponder o'er a former day,
When first, although unknown to thee,
We, wandering, cross'd each other's way.

Nor did th' auspicious moments move
Away like those I meet with now :
I freely spoke—my theme was love ;
For throbb'd my heart and flush'd my brow.

I listen'd, and methought thy tongue
Gave utterance to a cold reply,
Which chill'd my soul, though thou wert young,
Blushing in virgin modesty.

Enough,—we parted :—had I press'd
 My suit, and shared, perhaps, success,
 My earthly lot had been more blest,
 My pride—my aspiration less.

Our path through life had been the same ;
 And though the way were far and wide,
 No brighter smile, no dream of fame,
 Had ever lured me from thy side !

Then had affliction marr'd my rest,
 Or were my spirit sad with care,
 I would have turn'd me to thy breast,
 And sought for peace and solace there.

Or else had generous fortune led
 Our steps among her summer bowers ;
 And for our joy profusely spread
 Around us all her loveliest flowers :

When I compared their charms with thine,
 The choicest blossom hadst been thou :
 Their buds were scarcely meet to twine
 A chaplet round thy open brow.

Yet come what would, while mine were health,
 And I remain'd beloved of thee,
 Sharing secure such store of wealth,
 O what were worldly change to me !

My heart, be calm ! those dreams are o'er ;
 The hour that marks thy stay is run :

Adieu—be happy evermore !
Thy hand is by another won.

And should my warmest wish be heard
By angels, thou shalt ever prove
Sole object of the pure regard
That springs in man from woman's love.

For me, I seek an arduous path,
And none my future fate can tell ;
Yet soon disease, or early death,
May blight our cherish'd hopes—Farewell !

1834.

TO A FEMALE FRIEND.

WHILE in thy presence I remain,
And speak of early days to thee,
Long slumbering thoughts revive again,
For thou art still beloved by me ;
And not the less that thou hast borne
The loss of friends and trials keen :
Yea, weary wanderers and forlorn
Within the world we both have been.

Thy morning sky was overcast,
Cold dropping clouds above thee hung ;
Even now, thy noon is not o'erpast,
And deeply has thy heart been wrung ;
Yet with a calm, unswerving mind,
Embracing good, despising ill,
Here art thou, to thy lot resign'd,
Gentle and fair, and blooming still.

For me—privation have I known,
Long hours of bondage dull and drear,
While o'er my head the storms have blown
That make our finest feelings sear.
Man's selfish ways I never loved ;
The world's applause I found it vain :
All these and more my bosom moved,
Yet pride forbade me to complain.

I do not well to be alone ;
And thou—why art thou not my bride ?
Upon the earth there is not one
I would have nearer to my side.
I know and feel in all my toil,
Did I thy warm affection share,
That kindly glance and winning smile
Would lighten life of half its care.

O is there not, beneath the sky,
Where human foot would not intrude,
Some spot to which we still may fly,
And pass our days in solitude ?

How cheerful would we wake from rest,
As the fair sun in light arose ;
And when he chamber'd in the west,
Descend as softly to repose !

Vain is the wish ! there are demands
Upon us which we may not shun ;
Nor must we think to fold our hands,
Or slumber till our work be done.
Then let us, 'mid the fight of life,
Stand firm, nor lay our weapons down :
If basely we evade the strife,
What claim have we to wear the crown :

We will not murmur at our fate,
Nor shrink before our trials here :
They give us knowledge of our state,
And fit us for a higher sphere.
'Tis joy to know where'er we roam
Upon this bleak and barren strand,
Our Father's house—a happy home,
Awaits us in another land.

Still, as we journey by the way,
O bend thy welcome footsteps near,
That I may see thee day by day,
And thy melodious accents hear !
I've thought some heavenly power did send
Thee down to be a guide to me ;
So loved and loving I would spend
The future of my life with thee.

CHASING CUPID.

IT was then a happy time,
Glorious summer was in prime,
Fleetly sped the rapid hours,
We would go to gather flowers.
Mary fair that neatly dresses,
Helen with the auburn tresses,
Ann whose step was light as feather,—
We the four went off together.

Sweet the posies we did pull,
And our hands were nearly full,
When a little wingéd boy
From a blooming bush did fly.
Smiles came o'er the maidens' faces ;
And as lad that eager chases
Butterfly, so I, in laughter,
Follow'd fast the antic after.

He appear'd an airy toy,
Bigger than a dragon fly ;
While his colour, glittering bright,
Varied with the changing light.

Pretty plaything might you deem him,
For his wings did well beseem him ;
At his back was slung a quiver ;
Full of mirth his look was ever.

He did like an archer bear
Bow and arrows polish'd clear ;
And as I pursued behind,
He escaped me like the wind.
Among roses he would hide him,
Lurking till I came beside him ;
Then, as I to seize him darted,
Like a bird away he started.

Sportsmen feel an earnest flame,
When outwitted by the game ;
So I felt, and keenly strove
To entrap the god of Love.
What did farther still provoke me,
I believe he tried to mock me,
By the chuckling sounds he utter'd
Every time as off he flutter'd.

Round by Mary he would float,
All her bland attractions note,
Fan her cheek and open brow,
Shoot as if to pierce me through.
Then, while by her lips he passes,
He must snatch forbidden kisses :
Ample joy though brief the measure—
How I envied him his pleasure !

Next to Helen's skin of snow
Laughingly the elf would go ;
Point me to her teeth of pearl,
Swing him from a dangling curl ;
Drink her breath while I was looking,
Caring not for her rebuking ;
Shoot again more quick than lightning
When in smiles her face was bright'ning.

Then to Anna he would fly,
Peer within her deep-blue eye,
Hover o'er her features meek,
Close to hers would lay his cheek ;
Mark her hand and foot the rarest,
Wanton round her form the fairest—
Not an angel's could be finer ;
All in all, oh, what diviner !

Still the imp in savage glee
Boldly wing'd his bolts on me :
Wounded, then a garland fit
I of twigs the greenest knit ;
Hemm'd the sprightly damsels in it,
Just to seize a lucky minute
When among them I might take him,
And secure a captive make him.

From white shoulders, ruby lips,
With a charm each shaft he tips ;
Straight, like piercing drops of rain,
At me he lets drive amain.

Sheltering last in Anna's bosom,
He his sharpest weapon chose him,
And his utmost vigour trying,
Up he flew and left me lying.

Cruel maidens ! can you guess
What they did in my distress ?
Dancing, laughing, they came round,
Close my eyes in triumph bound ;
Made me grant them many a favour,
Swear to be their slave for ever :—
Cupid, villain, crow'd above them :—
“ Ah, how I can make you love them ! ”

Thus was I, despite my art,
Overcome in pride of heart—
Caught within the very net
That for Love myself had set.
Hence, enthrall'd, I may not gather
Bud nor blossom now, but rather
Faithfully discharge my duty,
Celebrating worth and beauty !

INSTRUCTIONS TO A PAINTER.

PARTLY AFTER ANACREON.

Now your skill you well may prove :
Paint the likeness of my love ;
But in true simplicity
Unadorn'd her dress shall be.
Neither gem nor jewel sheen
Will I have about her seen,
So that she may look the neater :
Than herself, what can be sweeter ?

From the canvas, make her rise
As she is, of middle size ;
Nor lay on a single shade
To improve what Nature made.
Feet and ankles may be shewn
Peeping underneath her gown :
I would not that they were smaller,
Nor her figure wish it taller.

Give, beneath her middle trim,
Room for every rounded limb,
Taking care to form a waist
Fit for Dian's girdle chaste ;

Straightly girt it need not be,
So you draw it slight and free ;
Working up the outline bolder,
When you reach her lovely shoulder.

Then remember, if you please,
Either arm to trace at ease,
Tapering downward to the hand,
Fine as ever yet was plann'd :
Part above the wrist you show
Fresh as spring's reviving glow :
Earliest flowers she may present me ;
Such a boon shall well content me.

Like a little Eden sweet,
Or a home for Cupid meet,
Half in snowy lawn conceal'd,
Let her bosom be reveal'd ;
There, enthroned on purest white,
Witchery most exquisite
Proudly sits, her realm surveying,
A resistless sceptre swaying.

Higher up, her open neck
Shadow forth without a speck,
As the leaves of lilies bright
Blooming ever in your sight :
Fashion'd in proportion fair,
Never saw you aught so rare,
Head erect, and shoulders joining,
Every graceful curve combining.

Ah! your favour she will win
When you mark her polish'd chin
Slightly dimpled, and a cheek
Whose young roses health bespeak.
Not Aurora, dropping dew
From the east, unveils a hue,
Aided by her car's reflection,
That may match my love's complexion.

Make her tempting lips unite,
Hiding rows of teeth most white ;
Nose unequall'd, set so true ;
Eyes than vault of heaven more blue ;
Lashes long ; each pencill'd brow
Lightly arch'd as Cupid's bow ;
But the azure depths below them
Will take all your skill to show them.

Draw her forehead smooth and high,
Clear as an Italian sky ;
Then relieve its radiance fair
By her parted auburn hair.
Let descend each clustering curl
Loose as that of cottage girl,
Not to hide her ears, but dangling,
Watchful eye and heart entangling.

Could you catch her native grace,
The expression of her face,
Partly bashful, partly kind,
Index to her virtuous mind,

And convey before the eye
All her matchless symmetry,
None, believe me, hence may venture
To excel you as a painter !

Finish'd thus, as she would seem
Coming to me in a dream,
Giving all that she possess'd
For a corner in my breast,
I conceive you will agree,
Diamonds of no use could be
These surpassing charms to brighten,
Loveliness like hers to heighten.

Oh ! amid a world of tears,
As we look to coming years,
She is like a thing of light
Making all around her bright :
Living source of joy and mirth,
Fairest object on the earth,
Pure as angels bending o'er her,
I can cease not to adore her !

MORNING.

AWAKE, my love ! the shades of night
Depart before the rising light ;
The lovely sky, all dappled gray,
Gives welcome to the god of day ;
Yet fair and brightly though he shine,
His radiance cannot equal thine !

Arise, my dearest ! come away !
To mark the morning let us stray :
The genial air, so mild and calm,
Is fresher than the purest balm,
Where sweets from every shrub combine
To emulate that breath of thine !

O come, my gentlest ! come with me !
The deep-green earth in splendour see ;
But, gazing on her gorgeous dress
Throughout those vales of loveliness
To where the distant hills decline,
Her beauty cannot vie with thine !

Come forth, my love ! the sky is blue :
Both blade and flower are gemm'd with dew !

The rich unfolding rose appears
Blushing amid its pearly tears,
And with the lily would entwine,
As if to match that hue of thine !

Welcome, my love ! both land and sky
Resound with vocal harmony ;
Yet all the strains that warblers sing,
Of melting music, cannot bring
Such pure delight to ear of mine
As those mellifluous words of thine !

Come, let us go ! the brightest flower,
The liveliest bird in forest bower,
Exult not in the season's pride
As I, when thou art by my side ;
Nor shall I hence at aught repine,
Ennobled by that love of thine !

With thee all trial I can brave,
Wander o'er earth and stem the wave,
Though winter freeze or summer sigh,
Nor deem that harm shall come me nigh
While I possess a sacred shrine
Within that spotless breast of thine !

All praise to HIM whose wondrous care
Is mirror'd in a world so fair !
Whose goodness through the joyful spring
Awakes from sleep each living thing,
And, kinder still, whose power divine
Framed me that hand and heart of thine !

CUPID AND DEATH.

[If you cannot take, as it were, the dead branch of a neglected fable, and breathe thereon till it burst forth into bud, leaf, and blossom, you are no true poet.]

LAST night in slumber as I lay,
I dream'd that I was far away :
The scenes of youth rose on my view,
And well each lovely spot I knew.
There was a bank with verdure green,
On which the fairies oft were seen
By lonely pilgrim through the night,
Dancing beneath the mild moonlight.

It was, methought, in summer time,
When herb and flower were in their prime ;
And on this bank, by grass o'ergrown,
A flying boy alighted down.
His glittering pinions he did fold,
His hair was bright as burnish'd gold ;
But all fatigued he seem'd with play,
And down upon the sward he lay.

His bow and shafts away he threw ;
His quiver he unfasten'd too ;
When lo ! a meagre, frightful thing
Came sailing nigh on viewless wing.
Beneath its arm a scythe it bore ;
Of darts it also held a store ;
And stooping down, without annoy,
It sat beside the gentle boy.

Like monarchs brave, who tame the pride
Of haughty hosts on every side,
They told of brilliant actions done—
What glorious conquests they had won !
The scythe and weapons near them lay ;
Oppressive was the sultry day :
At last, o'ercome with languor deep,
Upon the grass they fell asleep.

Of rarest beauty seem'd the child,
Who, as he lay, unconscious smiled :
Once seen, that lovely, winning face
In memory ever held a place.
Lank, lean, and loathsome to the sight,
The other lay more dark than night :
Yea, strange it was how form so thin
Existed, or had breath within.

Full swiftly came the tiny elves
Of either sex to sport themselves :
In measured dance, with music slow,
Around the boy they circling go :

His tempting lips the maidens kiss ;
His hands, his fingers they caress ;
They twine in graceful curls his hair,
And nestle on his bosom fair.

With sign and look of utmost scorn,
The other sleeping thing they spurn :
They mock its fleshless face, and toil
The scythe's devouring edge to spoil.
Others again in haste arrange
The darts and arrows to exchange,
That, when awake, the shape and boy
Might each the other's shafts employ.

At length the sound of thunder fell,
Which, echoing near, dissolved the spell.
At Jove's approach in murmur deep,
The shadowy beings rose from sleep :
Each in its hand the weapons caught,
And off it flutter'd quick as thought ;
Nor could a single fay be seen :
All, all had vanish'd from the green !

Awaking then, and pondering o'er
What I had read of classic lore ;
And knowing oft how, in a dream,
Ideas vague embodied seem—
All tended to confirm my faith,
Cupid was one, the other Death,
And how they had exchanged before
The darts and arrows either bore.

Who hath not in this world of care,
Beheld the beautiful, the fair,
When wounded by the urchin sly,
Lay it to heart and drooping die?
Even that which, o'er creation wide,
Inspired with rapture all beside,
Became a canker to their bloom,
And sent them to an early tomb.

Still, looking round us, it appears
That there are men advanced in years,
Who, waiting for the fatal hour,
Experience love's resistless power :
With wonted fire the bosom burns,
Our genial glow of life returns ;
And though the locks are wearing gray,
Our heart exults at beauty's sway.

THE DYING KNIGHT.

O, SOLDIER, come hasten ;
Our foemen fly now
My helmet unfasten,
For damp is my brow.

My charger that bounded
In pride o'er the plain,
Like me, he lies wounded
To rise not again.

Within my mouth gathers
The moist rushing gore :
The home of my fathers
Shall see me no more !

Death's shadow is o'er me ;
Yet memory comes forth
To picture before me
The place of my birth.

Ah ! not now the beacon
From my turrets shall wave
Its red flame to waken
The sons of the brave.

No warrior shall sally
In arms from my gate,
Around me to rally
And share in my fate.

The stranger shall tread o'er
My desolate halls ;
And the ivy will spread o'er
My threshold and walls.

Oh ! deep is the anguish
From Myra to part,

And leave her to languish—
The joy of my heart.

In her bower, wreath'd over
With flowers, on her lute
She may play, but her lover—
His tongue shall be mute.

In vain will she listen
The sound of his track ;—
Her eye shall not glisten
To see him come back.

Alas ! when we parted,
Her heart, beating fast,
Foretold, as it started,
That look was our last.

Our sun of pure gladness
Of lustre is shorn ;
The long night of sadness
Will usher no morn.

In my first field of glory
I fall, nor a name
Shall I add to the story
Of my forefathers' fame.

I grieve thus to perish,
The last of my race :
My people can cherish
Of my valour no trace.

Yon broad orb that blazes—
I thought that like him
I should set; but death glazes
My eyes—they are dim.

My warm wish is given
That my country be free;
And I supplicate heaven,
O, my true love, for thee!

1828.

THE CAGED BIRD.

To other climes on changing wing
Has fled the wintry blast;
And, robed in verdure, joyful spring
Comes to our land at last.
The dew is on the daisied ground,
Leaves deck the forest tree;
But thus in weary thraldom bound
Can I delighted be?

In dark green foliage, nestling warm,
I first beheld the day:

'Mong all that eye or ear could charm,
I flew from spray to spray.
A happy dream my life was then—
An endless feast of joy :
Now drooping lone must I remain
A captive till I die !

No landscape fair attracts my sight ;
No stream runs wimpling by ;
I scarcely see the radiant light
That beams on earth and sky.
The breeze brings not to me its balm ;
No pleasure comes with morn ;
Nor will my fluttering heart be calm
When all its ties are torn.

Here, in a grated prison pent,
I cannot stretch my wing ;
And did I give my bosom vent,
How sadly I would sing !
'Tis cruel if my lady deem
That I can warble clear ;
Or raise, to suit a pleasing theme,
The music she would hear.

What pity ! from the forest tree
That man should thus beguile
A little harmless bird to be
Shut up in durance vile !
May I consoling aid impart
To those who comfort seek ?

Remove a sorrow from the heart,
A furrow from the cheek ?

Oh ! but it were a welcome time
Of harmony and mirth,
Could bondage base and wanton crime
Be banish'd from the earth !
Then love in dance with friendship dear,
And summer, strewing flowers,
Again would make the world appear
Like Eden's blissful bowers.

PLEASURES OF THE COUNTRY.

I DINNA heed your splendid ha's,
Nor a' your houses gay ;
On ilka side built up wi' wa's
I wadna stop a day.
But place me in the open field,
The sheep an' kye amang,
To listen, near some lowly shield,
The mavis lilt his sang.

I ne'er could like your ladies bright,
Array'd i' satin fine ;
For a' their neatness to the sight,
It's art that makes them shine.
Gie me a lass wi' rosy cheek,
An' simple winning smile,
Whase glance o' love, an' look sae meek,
Wad ilka grief beguile.

I value not your gentlemen,
Wha winna care for me ;
I'm sure there's scarcely ane i' ten
Sae gude as he should be ;
But I respect an honest lad,
Plain as his heart is leal,
That, whether ane be blithe or sad,
Can like a brother feel.

Ye needna praise your town to me ;
The din I couldna bide,
However bra' its folk may be,
Or streets sae grand an' wide.
For a' its countless store o' wealth,
Nae skill wad I hae there :
Aboon it, like a shower o' filth,
Hings aye the sooty air.

But gie to me around my feet
To see the morning dew ;
To breathe the air like incense sweet,
Where skies are bright an' blue :

To bear a mind unscathed by care—
A heart frae trouble free :
Sic are the pleasures I wad share :
The country still for me !

INSCRIPTION

FOR THE FRONT OF A GROTTO.

WELCOME, friend, although thy way
Hither uninviting lay ;
Thou mayst find ere life be done
Happy mansions—many a one,
Bosom'd in some lonely wood,
Near the margin of a flood,
Or amid some rocky wild,
Where high hills on hills are piled,
Whose approaches seem so rude
Few will trace such solitude.

I have known a splendid gate
Lead where liveried servants wait
Upon those whose life would seem
Like a vague and sensual dream,
Breathing but to eat and sleep
Till a vault their ashes keep.

Here the free and active mind
Roams through science unconfined ;
Takes delight the world to view,
Or can form creations new !

1830.

SONNETS.

I.

A COMPARISON.

IN spring, when Phœbus' car ascends the skies,
How glad all nature seems !—each opening flower
Dries up its tear drops, and from forest bower
And brake, what varied strains of music rise !
Even thus, fair lady, do thy sparkling eyes,
Deep-blue, such warm effulgence o'er me shower,
That, like the glorious sun, their genial power
Chases all woe, and every joy supplies.
Would it were mine to bask beneath their light
Till all my years flew by on heedless wing ;
Then sink to slumber as they set in night.
But ah ! fond bosom, check thy hopeful spring !
Such fair and lovely flowers neglect may blight,
And the sear'd heart no future buds will bring.

1830.

II.

WRITTEN AFTER A JOURNEY TO SCOTLAND.

LADY, the palaces where Scotland's kings
Lived, flourish'd, and decay'd, my feet have traced ;
Temples whose shrines are broken and defaced,
Altars around whose tops green ivy clings,
Famed battle-fields where victory stretch'd her wings
O'er patriots who their country's cause embraced,
Tombs where the sacred dust of those is placed
Who now o'er climes the light of genius flings :
These have I witness'd, and my heart beat fast,
For o'er them, since a child, my mind did brood :
Crowded before me visions of the past ;
Yet in these dreams a wish would oft intrude,
That 'mid such scenes my lot through life were cast,
With thy sweet smiles to grace my solitude !

1830.

III.

LOVE.

FAIREST of nature's works art thou to me ;
I view the rose's freshness on thy cheek :
Feeling thy breath, 'twere vain for me to seek
The breeze that gently vibrates herb or tree.

Though summer's locks are graceful, yet more free
 Hang those brown ringlets by thy forehead meek ;
 Thy lips are like the morn—thine eyes bespeak,
 From heaven's own hue, that goodness rests in thee.
 Oh ! every charm of nature's varied face
 My heart has thrill'd with rapture to explore ;
 And when her beauty, loveliness, and grace
 Are all in thee combined, I seek no more
 Than, day by day, through life's remaining space,
 Such exquisite perfection to adore !

1830.

IV.

A DREAM.

I DREAM'D that, seated in a little barque,
 I floated darkling down a river wide ;
 My kindred all save one did with me glide,
 Each in their boat, and I could plainly mark
 Those of all climes were with me. Some the spark
 Of friendship cherish'd ; others, side by side,
 Fought on, and grappled fiercely, till the tide
 Swallow'd them up amid its waters dark.
 The glorious sun was shrouded from my sight ;
 Yet in the gloom, from echoing shore to shore,
 Unnumber'd torches shed a radiant light,
 Left by the sons of genius and of lore ;
 Away behind me far they sparkled bright,
 While shadow, cloud, and morning lay before.

1831.

V.

FROM A DYING MOTHER TO HER CHILD.

EMBLEM of innocence ! the placid smile
On thy sweet face can only make me weep :
Thy sire is gone, and I can feel the sleep
Of death approach my heart. A little while,
And thou must brave a world of fraud and guile :
Yet oh ! if journeying where allurements deep
Are spread to tempt the reckless, wilt thou keep
Virtue's straight path, and shun the bad and vile ?
Yes ! faith confirms my hope that thou shalt be
Guarded by HIM who calms the tempest's roar :
Though toss'd alone on life's dark troubled sea,
Thy barque shall safely gain that blessed shore
Where I will fondly wait to welcome thee :
Nor want, nor woe, nor change shall reach us more !

1832.

VI.

WRITTEN IN MY THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR.

EARNING alone the means whereby I live,
Is it not hard to waste my years of prime
In slavery to business, and thus give
To endless duty all my precious time ?

Long have I done so, and regret it much,
As on the past I ponder, that by me
No trophy has been won, nor chaplet such
That, when I die, I may remember'd be.
Yet let me not despair :—men truly brave
Would triumph over fortune worse than mine ;
And at my shackled lot, until the grave
Close e'er my head, it boots not to repine :
Peace must not be destroy'd in seeking praise ;
I'll persevere, and hope for better days !

VII.

ON THE REV. JOHN HODGSON,

THE HISTORIAN OF NORTHUMBERLAND.

AMONGST the number who for honours strive
Throughout Northumbria's bounds by hill or wave,
Exists there one whose glory shall survive
When he hath pass'd the portals of the grave ?
Say, from before Time's scythe, with ardour brave,
Has he retrieved such trophies, that his name
Posterity shall gratefully engrave
Within the dome of all-enduring fame ?
Yes, Hodgson, such renown thy merits claim :
Northumbria's faithful chronicler art thou ;
Thy page to future ages shall proclaim
What can of her be known, and she thy brow
With never-fading leaves may now entwine—
Her immortality is wreathed with thine !

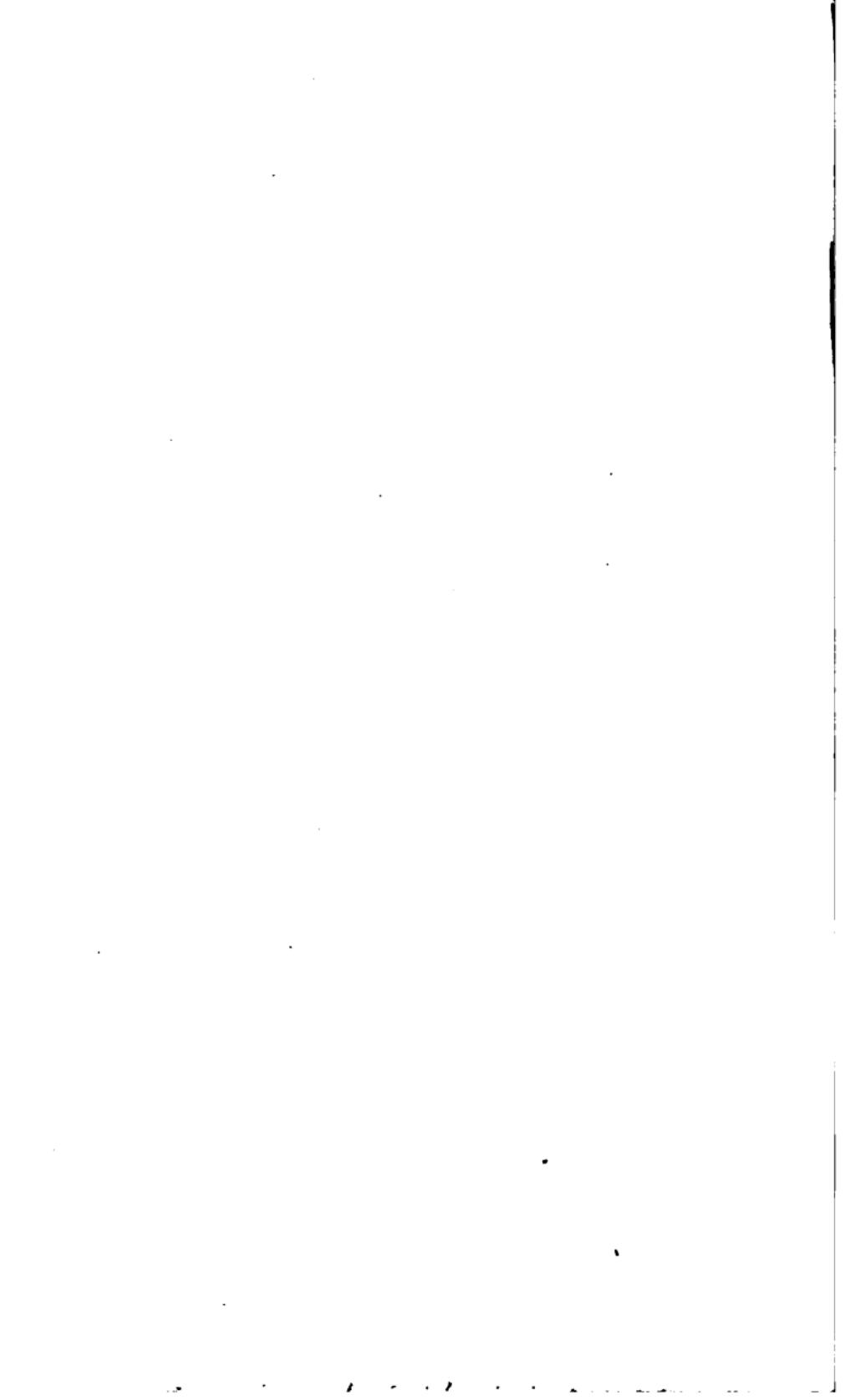
VIII.

ON THE SAME,

UPON HIS DEPARTURE TO THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND IN 1839.

BEHOLD Northumbria drooping and in tears !
Dark lowering clouds shadow her visage fair :
Why should she grieve ? The fleeting lapse of years
Can furrow not her cheek, nor blanch her hair ;
Yet has she cause of sorrow. He, whose care
For years has been to rear a pillar high,
And grave thereon her story, doth repair,
In quest of health, beneath a warmer sky.
And she indeed may mourn, for never eye
Gloated like his o'er all her ancient lore ;
Or who beside could better testify
What she is now, and what she was of yore ?
Watch him, ye heavenly powers, where'er he roam ;
Bind up his nerves, and guide him safely home !

Ballads.



YOUNG ALLAN.

ON banks o' Rule young Allan lived ;
A merry ploughman lad was he ;
Fu' blithely could he sing a sang,
And tell a tale wi' mickle glee.
Fair Jessie's hand he fondly sought,
Wha dwelt in Liddesdale the while ;
Love shot his arrows frae her e'en,
And hid himsel' aneath her smile.

Yet blight comes o'er the sweetest buds,
While mists obscure the clearest sky ;
And Allan heard a dulefu' tale
That marr'd his fairest hopes o' joy.
He heard that Jessie's witchin' glance
Upon another wander'd free ;
Sae on a night he took his plaid,
And off he set the lass to see.

Wi' eident step he onward sped
O'er benty knowes and mosses wild ;
The moon was up, but raking clouds
Cam' o'er afore her, darkly piled.

Still held he on until he saw
 Where rush'd the youthfu' Liddel's wave
 Upon its course, by ruin'd towers
 And mony a noted hero's grave.

When Jessie's hame he reach'd at last,
 Around him fell the driving snaw;
 In fierce careerin' gusts the wind
 Across the dale did keenly blaw.
 Frae 'hint a stack he slyly mark'd
 Young Riccarton, wi' little din,
 Come past the window to the door,
 And faithless Jessie loot him in.

Alas, alas, for Allan now !
 He saw his toil was a' in vain :
 The roughest night was nougnt to this—
 The pointed sleet or pelting rain.
 A slight frae them we warmly lo'e,
 In spite o' pride, is bad to bear :
 It comes aboon our hopes like death,
 Destroying a' we cherish dear.

To calm his mind he paused na lang,
 But to the damsel's dwelling drew :—
 "I hadna thought the gate was lang,
 Nor night was snell, had ye been true ;
 But I hae heard my grannie say,
 'There never comes an ill its lane ;'
 The skaith and scorn are mine to bide,
 Though it's unmanly to complain.

“ I’ve often ta’en dear woman’s part
 When slander sought to blast her fame ;
 I ever argued on her side,
 Poor thing, if frailty brought her shame.
 Now should her constancy and faith
 Be lightly held, what can I say ?
 O faithless Jessie, fare ye weel ;
 We meet nae mair, and I’m away.”—

He row’d him tightly in his plaid ;
 His hazel stick he grasp’d amain ;
 And onward, through the wintry night,
 He took the weary way again.
 As ilka rising bank he clamb,
 He thought the foulest blast that blew
 Was no’ sae cauld as woman’s heart
 When to her vow she proves untrue.

Hour after hour, ‘mang sleet and snaw,
 O’er moss and muir he struggled sair,
 Till, fairly wi’ fatigue o’ercome,
 He fear’d to sink and rise nae mair.
 But frae a herd’s wee house the light
 Shone steady like a cheering star,
 And there he thought to rest a while ;
 Sin’ gloaming he had wander’d far.

Soon as he rappit at the door,
 An aged man, sedate and gray,
 Cam’ out and welcomed Allan in ;
 Syne by the hallan led the way.

“ Young stranger,” quo’ the herd sae kind,
“ Till morning ye maun wi’ us bide ;
Ye sha’na want what we hae here,
Sae warm ye at the ingle-side.”—

He sat him down beside the fire;
The tenty wifie up she raise,
And made him soon a dish o’ tea,
An’ kaim’d his hair, an’ dried his claes.
When prayer was offer’d up on high,
Then off to rest young Allan drew ;
Wi’ kinder folk he never met,
A better bed he never knew.

As morning cam’, a sprightly lass
Set out the breakfast nice and clean :
Her shape was trig, her foot was neat,
The light o’ love was in her e’en.
Nae wonder Allan sought her hand,
And she agreed his bride to be ;
Now gin ye wander Scotland o’er,
A blither pair ye winna see.

LADY JEAN.



[The scenery of this ballad is in Northumberland. Bothal Castle is beautifully situated on the Wansbeck, a few miles below Morpeth. At Otterburne stood a tower or castle, long in possession of the Umfrevilles—a distinguished family; and the place has acquired celebrity in Border song and story, from the battle fought there in 1388, between the heroes, Percy and Douglas.]

By Bothal Tower, sweet Wansbeck's stream
Rins bickerin' to the sea ;
Aloft, within the breeze o' morn,
The banner's wavin' free.

There's joy in Bothal's bonnie bowers,
There's mirth within the ha' ;
But owre the cheeks o' Lady Jean
The tricklin' tear-draps fa'.

She sits within her chamber high,
Her cousin by her side ;
Yet sweer is she to don the dress
That's fitting for a bride.

“ O haste ! Lord Dacre’s on his way ;
 Ye hae nae time to spare :
 Come let me clasp that girdle jimp,
 And braid your glossy hair.

“ O’ a’ the ladies i’ the land,
 Ye’se be surpass’d by nane ;
 The lace that’s on your velvet robe
 Wi’ goud ’ll stand its lane.

“ This jewell’d chaplet ye’ll put on,
 That broider’d necklace gay ;
 For we maun hae ye buskit weel
 On this, your bridal day.”—

“ Oh ! Ellen, ye would think it hard
 To wed against your will !
 I never loo’d Lord Dacre yet ;
 I dinna like him still.

“ He kens, though oft he sued for love
 Upon his bended knee,
 Ae tender word, ae kindly look,
 He never gat frae me.

“ And he has gained my mother’s ear,
 My father’s stern command ;
 Yet this fond heart can ne’er be his,
 Altho’ he claim’ my hand.

“ Oh, Ellen, softly list to me !
 I still may ’scape the snare ;

When morning raise o'er Otterburne,
The tidings would be there.

“ And hurrying on comes Umfreville,—
His spur is sharp at need :
There's nane in a' Northumberland,
Can mount a fleeter steed.

“ Ah ! weel I ken his heart is true,
He will—he must be here :
Aboon the garden wa' he'll wave
The pennon o' his spear.”—

“ Far is the gate, the burns are deep,
The broken muirs are wide ;
Fair lady, ere your true love come,
Ye'll be Lord Dacre's bride.

“ Wi' stately, solemn step, the priest
Climbs up the chapel stair :
Alas ! alas ! for Umfreville ;
His heart may weel be sair !

“ Keep back ! keep back ! Lord Dacre's steed—
Ye maunna trot but gang :
And haste ye ! haste ye ! Umfreville !
Your lady thinks ye lang.”—

In velvet sheen she wadna dress ;
Nae jewels o'er her shone ;
Nor broider'd necklace, sparkling bright,
Would Lady Jean put on.

Up raise she frae her cushion'd seat,
 And totter'd like to fa' ;
 Her cheek grew like the rose, and then
 Turned whiter than the snaw.

“ O Ellen, throw the casement up ;
 Let in the air to me :
 Look down within the castle-yard,
 And tell me what ye see.” —

“ Your father's stan'in' on the steps,
 Your mother's at the door ;
 Out thro' the gateway comes the train,
 Lord Dacre rides before.

“ Fu' yauld an' gracefu' lichts he down,
 Sae does his gallant band ;
 And low he doffs his bonnet plume,
 And shakes your father's hand.

“ List ! lady, list a bugle note !
 It sounds not loud but clear ;—
 Up ! up ! I see aboon the wa'
 Your true love's pennon'd spear ! ” —

An' up fu' quick gat Lady Jean ;—
 Nae ailment had she mair :
 Blithe was her look, an' firm her step,
 As she ran down the stair.

An' thro' amang the apple trees,
 An' up the walk she flew :

Until she reach'd her true love's side
Her breath she scarcely drew.

Lord Dacre fain would see the bride :
He sought her bower alane;
But dowf an' blunkit grew his look
When Lady Jean was gane.

Sair did her father stamp an' rage,
Sair did her mother mourn;
She's up an' off wi' Umfreville
To bonnie Otterburne.

EARL MORAY'S CAPTURE.

THE Scots upon Northumberland like swarming locusts
came;
Their path by tower and hamlet was mark'd by smoke
and flame;
Earl Moray led them on, and paused not till he came
before
Newcastle's guarded walls, and these he has assaulted
sore.

King David Bruce is in the camp;—each man before
his eyes
Endeavours boldly to perform some feat of high
enterprise:
Midway between the threatening towers a struggle they
maintain;
They try to pierce the barriers, but find all efforts vain.

Sir John, the gallant Neville, of the fortress held com-
mand,
And round his floating banner throng'd a brave and
martial band—
True men who in the town's defence would stand or
nobly die—
Would hurl each fierce invader back, or in its ruins lie.

A stirring day of warfare pass'd;—the sun's last
troubled beam
Fell dimly o'er St. Nicholas' spire and Tyne's broad
rushing stream;
Then rain came on and thunder growl'd, the watchfires'
ruddy light,
With bolts of flame, glared wildly through the dark-
ness of the night.

Outspoke the noble Neville amongst the warriors all,
As they in close discourse were set within his lofty
hall:—
“Methinks at such a time as this, it were a fitting
thing,
To rush within the Scottish lines and try to seize their
king.

"Myself for one will venture :—what numbers can we raise ?

The deed, though we should miss our mark, at least may gain us praise,

And will a fair reprisal be on such a hated foe."—

With one long shout the band arose, and answer'd, "We will go!"—

Then there were buckling on of arms and rivetting of mail ;

And prayers were breathed from female lips which fear had render'd pale :

Sir John upon a charger black before the troop appears ;
Their number when he marshall'd them was twice an hundred spears.

From out dark Newgate's frowning arch they softly rode and slow ;

No sound as they advance must rouse the unsuspecting foe ;

But the storm was in their favour,—as near the camp they drew,

The drenching rain came pouring down, the wind more fiercely blew.

"Now every man for his good king, and for his lady's love,

Take out his blade and by its use his claim to honour prove."—

Thus spoke the Neville as he drew his broad and shining brand,

And forward rush'd with lightning's speed amongst his eager band.

All opposition soon they clear'd, and onward—onward
went
O'er prostrate head and writhing limb, until, around the
tent
Which proudly rose the highest, each rein'd his pranc-
ing steed :
Earl Moray, rouse thee—seize thy sword—defend thee
—there is need !

The blood of four devoted guards was on the English
steel ;
The edge and force of Moray's blade three Englishmen
did feel ;
But ere another blow was dealt, the assailants closed
around
The vengeful leader where he stood, and bore him to
the ground.

Full soon they search'd the tent, but found no other
living wight ;
The King resided there at day, but left it in the night :
Ah, this precaution served him well, for had he present
been,
That very night his capture or else his death had seen.

Upon a steed was Moray borne, and close on either side,
With watchful eye and ready hand a trusty knight did
ride ;
Each spear again was in its rest when thus Sir John
did say,—
“Now are our foes awake and roused,—come let us
clear our way !”—

As thro' the grove the whirlwind sweeps, with all-subduing force,
The strongest oak, the tallest pine uprooting in its course,
So through the serried, closing ranks of the fierce unyielding foe,
Dispersing death on every hand, the English horsemen go.

Again beneath dark Newgate's arch are heard the horses' feet ;
Again, advancing two abreast, they issue on the street ;
A thousand voices welcome them of loving maid and dame—
A thousand tongues, where'er they go, their bravery proclaim.

Then let us pledge, with honour due, the memory of those
Who captured thus, at such an hour, the leader of our foes ;
And by us all remember'd be the gallant Neville's name ;
He nobly play'd a hero's part,—be his a hero's fame !

SIR GILBERT HAMILTON.

It fell upon a summer day beyond the noon tide hour,
Amidst all England's chivalry in Windsor's royal tower,
That stern and high debate arose, for thus the question
ran :—

Throughout the bounds of Christendom, who was the
bravest man ?

Exclaim'd Sir Gilbert Hamilton, a young and dauntless
knight,

“ I place King Robert Bruce before each other martial
wight :

He hath been England's deadliest foe, as Bannockburn
can tell ;

In battle shock or listed field, no arm can his excel.”—

De Spenser spoke :—“ It ill becomes a knight in Eng-
land born

To throw upon her chivalry such rude contempt and
scorn :

But if Sir Gilbert Hamilton be not in jesting mood,
Perhaps within his veins may run some trace of Scottish
blood.”—

“ My mother was most virtuous, and that my lance
shall prove
Upon your helm when next we meet: meantime, there
lies my glove.”—

And as he spoke his gauntlet rang in centre of the hall:
De Spenser took the hostile pledge, before the warriors
all.

Oh ! eyes were strain'd and hearts aroused upon the
battle day,
When both the champions mounted came, in proud and
stern array :
Short was the struggle: courses three in dreadful ire
were run :
De Spenser grovell'd on the dust, his foe the honour won.

But few around the victor came his fair renown to
grace ;
The man who fell beneath his lance was of a potent race ;
And threatening looks and sullen brows he met with
everywhere ;
He must away—he must begone, if he his life would
spare.

All arm'd in mail of burnish'd steel full gaily rode he
forth ;
The broad and open way he kept that led him to the
north :
Six suns upon his left had set—the seventh was shin-
ing bright,
When Scotland's lovely hills and dales lay stretch'd
before his sight.

Through sounding rill and copsewood wild, on, on he held his way,
Until the banks and sweeping stream of Clyde before him lay :
Anon the hunters' horn and bay of hounds came on his ear,
And from a grove of dark green pines leap'd forth a panting deer.

Swift on its track, in open view, advanced the mingling foe,
And soon amid the moss and fern they laid its antlers low ;
Bold was the foremost horseman's look, majestic was his air,
Most firmly knit his frame and limbs, and sable dark his hair.

He gazed upon the stranger,—“ Sir Knight, why com'st thou here
In coat of mail, with battle sword, to chase the flying deer ?”—
“ From England's treacherous courtiers I come my life to save,
And refuge seek from Bruce, your king, the bravest of the brave.

“ My name is Gilbert Hamilton :—it chanced in Windsor Hall,
That lofty words and strife arose amongst our barons all,
And this the subject :—through each land where Christian banners wave,
Who was in battle's stern turmoil most chivalrous and brave ?

“ Unfearing to disclose the truth, I testimony bore
To Bruce’s fame, and gave him place all other knights
before ;
De Spenser mock’d me bitterly ; but down my gage I
threw :
We met within the battle lists,—the parasite I slew.”—

“ Enough, enough, Sir Gilbert ; we give thee welcome
here ;
Look round thee, and where’er thine eye traverses, far
or near,
These acres broad shall be thine own, whilst thou that
sword shalt bring
To aid fair Scotland’s cause and mine ; for I am Bruce,
the king !”

1839.

THE ARM OF WALLACE.

A LAY.

[“King Edward, in dispersing the remains of Wallace over the kingdom, ordered the right arm of the hero to be affixed above the bridge at Newcastle-upon-Tyne.”—*Tytler's Scotland*.]

Five centuries and near a half
Have glided now away,
Since it befell in summer,
At the closing of the day,
That two Newcastle burgesses
Upon the bridge did stand ;
And o'er them high were nail'd the bones
Of Wallace' arm and hand.

“ What progress can the King,” said one,
“ Have made since he went forth
With all his mighty force to quell
The rebels of the north ?
Whoever saw our waving host
Of banners, must allow
That Bruce, for all his hardihood,
Will sure be humbled now.

“When he is ta’en, a speedy death
 Must be his certain doom ;
 And I am looking on the wall
 To see if there is room,
 Beneath the arm of Wallace there,
 To spike one limb on high,
 That it may be a spectacle
 To each who passes by.”—

“Be not so quick,” the other said,
 “To judge of what may be :
 That fortune’s wheel will quickly turn,
 How often do we see !
 So noble Bruce’s bravery,
 With desperate men combined,
 May strew the force of England
 Like dust before the wind !

“I am not given to augury ;
 But when the King did ride
 With Gloucester gay and Hereford,
 The one on either side,
 On passing ‘neath these whiten’d bones,
 ‘Twas seen by all around,
 His charger stumbled, and himself
 Came nearly to the ground.

“We are not just to Scotland :
 The blood within her veins
 We shed like water, while her sons
 We force to drag our chains.

And deem not cruel acts like these
Are readily forgiven :
Will they not on our nation bring
The blighting curse of heaven ?"—

"Of right or wrong," the first replied,
"I have not much to say ;
Yet firmly do I rest assured
That we shall win the day.
O, who may cope with England ?
What northern clans defy
Her hundred thousand warriors,
With bosoms beating high ?

"Across the moor, as north they went,
The sun was shining bright ;
And ne'er before of fighting men
Beheld I such a sight !
Troop after troop, in endless line,
For hours together came :
With sparkling steel and gold the land
Seem'd as it were on flame !"—

With that, a rider hurried past
Upon a foaming steed ;
A messenger of woe he seem'd,
Urged to his utmost speed ;
And south he rode through England,
To bid her people mourn ;
For brother, husband, father,
Lay cold at Bannockburn.

The other burgess on the bridge,
With energy exclaim'd,
" Now Wallace, whom we *traitor* call'd,
A PATRIOT will be named.
He was the first to raise his hand
Against oppression strong ;
And hence his deeds shall be enroll'd
In history and song :

" If I might scan futurity,
Although my sight be dim,
No saint in all the calendar
Will be renown'd like him.
These very bones should be enshrined
Within a temple rare,
That noblest men of every land
Might worship **FREEDOM** there !"

LIGHTING OF THE BEACONS

ON THE SCOTTISH BORDER DURING THE NIGHT OF TUESDAY, THE 31ST JANUARY, 1804.

[The author may be permitted to observe, with no small pride, that his father was one of the Volunteers who marched into Kelso on the eventful morning commemorated in the following stanzas.]

IT was within our father's time, full sixty years ago,
That Britain stood in readiness to battle with her foe ;
For France beneath Napoleon's eye had gather'd every
band,
That she might come to conquer us, and seize our
father-land.

Wide o'er the Scottish Border, on each commanding
height,
Were beacons placed that, by their flame, might tell
throughout the night,
If once the base, invading hordes should dare to ven-
ture o'er,
And show themselves in war array upon our native
shore.

Soon set the sun—the lingering eve all dark and lonely sped,
Till the good folks of Yetholm town had partly gone to bed ;
When, hark ! a mounted horseman came spurring from the north ;
Then long and loud a bugle blew, when man and maid came forth.

“ Awake, arouse ye, Volunteers !—this is no time for sleep :
Make ready for the enemy though wife and children weep ;
The beacons high are blazing bright ; the French are doubtless near ;
Arise and arm you for defence of this our country dear !”—

Then beat to arms the rolling drum, and many a darting light,
Through open door and window small, gleam’d flickering on the night ;
While little girl and mother kind, and matron growing old,
Gave ready aid as if their hearts were made of sternest mould.

The Sergeant with his halbert long unto the Captain spoke :—

“ Some promises already made I fear me will be broke ;
Young Mat the miller courted long a damsel young and gay ;

They and their friends to-morrow set to be the bridal day :

“Poor Sam the smith his mother lost, and joiner Joe
 his son ;
 The mourners by the coffins sit, and what will now be
 done ?
 For all the three are muster’d here, nor mean behind to
 stay,
 But march with us to Kelso straight, and meet the
 coming fray.”—

A youthful wife came forward :—“ Sir, I have children
 three ;
 Yet Jim, my man,¹ is in your troop, and prosperous may
 you be !
 When public danger threatens us, renown be on you all
 Who for our country’s liberty will fight or nobly fall.”—

And then came up an aged dame :—“ Four sons are left
 to me :
 You have them all, and bold and brave long may they
 ever be !
 If one should fail of heart or hand, then strike him to
 the earth ;
 Much rather would I childless be than give a coward
 birth.”—

“ With men and sons,” the Captain said, “ of women
 such as these,
 Most daring acts of bravery we may perform at ease ;
 Their might and force in stern turmoil our enemies will
 feel ;
 Strong is the front that may withstand their charge of lead
 and steel.”—

¹ *Man*—husband.

Rang forth the martial music, and many a moisten'd eye
Beheld the squadron northward march beneath the
starry sky ;
But soon arose the waning moon, sole empress of the
night,
And towering hill and lengthening dale gleam'd in her
silver light.

Ascending up to higher ground, a stirring sight was there !
Far to the right the hill of Hume sent forth its ruddy
glare ;
Upon the left o'er Caverton the light was flaming high,
While Dunian distant in the west illumed both land
and sky.

As on they went, from every side came men in head-
long speed ;
And now by Kelso's spacious bridge they cross the
lovely Tweed ;
But when they reach'd the market place, arose so loud
a clang
Of welcome, that the streets around and neighbouring
echoes rang.

The sun arose, and such a morn ! Through all the
Border land,
From Berwick west o'er Liddesdale and on to Solway
strand,
Our yeomen brave by thousands, all bearing arms, came
forth,
Determined nobly to defend the country of their birth.

Advanced the day, and then the truth more plainly did appear ;
At Hume the warder chanced to mark in England, burning clear,
A blazing fire, and deeming it betoken'd woe and harm,
His beacon high he lighted up, and hence the false alarm.

Now glory to the gallant men who thus so bravely stood,
And in defence of all we love had shed their dearest blood ;

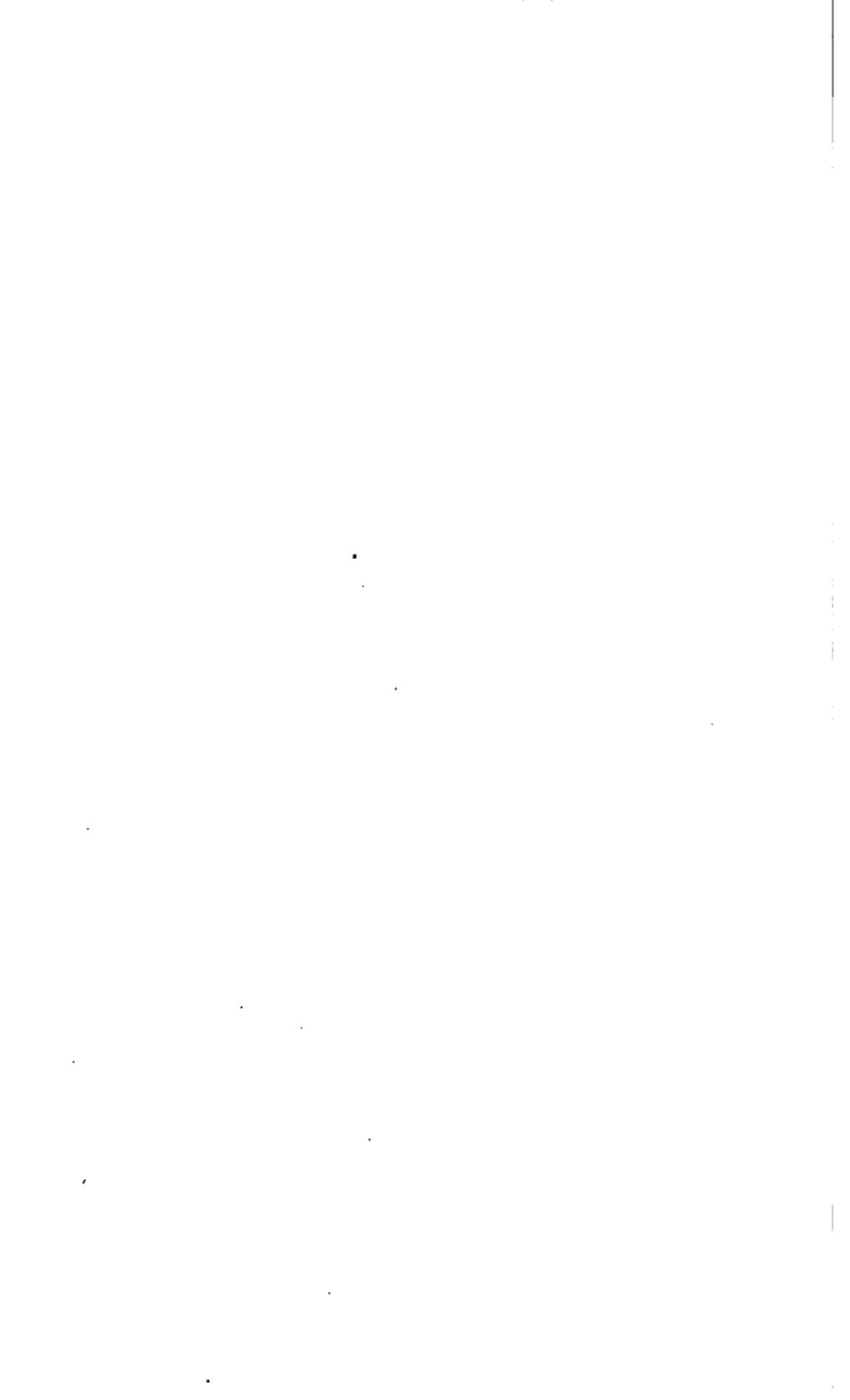
Although unused to feats of arms, the British spirit bold
Burn'd in their manly bosoms as it did in knights of old.

Oh, may the same a lesson prove through each succeeding age !

The gift of **FREEDOM** is our best and glorious heritage :
Our fathers won it as their right, through peril, blood,
and strife ;

And did we lose a boon so rare, oh ! what to us were life !

Songs.



BONNIE COQUET-SIDE.

O **MARY**, look how sweetly spring
Revives ilk opening flower :
Here in this brake, where lintwhites sing,
I'll form a simmer bower,
Beneath whose shade, in sultry days,
We'll see the burnies glide,
And sportive lambkins deck the braes,
On bonnie Coquet-side.

At morn I'll mark how melting shine
Thy een sae deeply blue ;
Or, tempted thereby, press to mine
Thy lips o' rosy hue.
To breathe the halesome air, we'll rove
Amang the hazels wide,
And rest betimes, to speak o' love,
By bonnie Coquet-side.

The wild rose pure, that scents the gale,
Shall grace thy bosom fair :
The violet dark, and cowslip pale,
I'll pu' to wreath thy hair.

O'er shelving banks, or wimpling streams,
 Thy gracefu' steps I'll guide
 To spots where nature loveliest seems
 On bonnie Coquet-side.

And when we view ilk furzy dale
 Where hang the dews o' morn,
 Ilk winding, deep, romantic vale,
 Ilk snaw-white blossom'd thorn,
 Frae every charm, I'll turn to thee,
 And think my winsome bride
 Mair sweet than aught that meets my e'e
 By bonnie Coquet-side.

THE KNIGHT'S RETURN.

FAIR Ellen, here again I stand ;
 All danger now is o'er ;
 No sigh to reach my native land
 Shall rend my bosom more.
 Ah, oft beyond the heaving main
 I mourn'd at fate's decree ;
 I wish'd but to be back again
 To Scotland and to thee.

O Ellen, how I prized thy love
In foreign lands afar !
Upon my helm I bore thy glove
Through thickest ranks of war.
And as the pledge in battle field
Recall'd thy charms to me,
I breathed a prayer behind my shield
For Scotland and for thee.

I scarce can tell how eagerly
My eyes were hither cast,
When, faintly rising o'er the sea,
These hills appear'd at last.
My very heart, as on the shore
I bounded light and free,
Declared by throbs the love I bore
To Scotland and to thee.

Thro' all the years it has been mine
In other climes to roam,
I've seen no lovelier form than thine—
No sweeter spot than home.
The wealth is much, the honours rare,
That fortune shower'd on me ;
And these, beloved, I come to share
'Mid Scotland's hills with thee !

THE MAID WHOM I ADORE.

THE rustling of the western gale
Is music sweet to me ;
It joyful comes o'er moor and dale
From off the distant sea,
Whose waves in lines of snowy foam
Salute the winding shore
Which circling bounds the peaceful home
Of her whom I adore.

The slowly sinking radiant sun
Is welcome to my sight,
When lofty ridge and summit dun
Are basking in his light :
I deem the while, ere he depart,
He sheds his glory o'er
The dark-eyed damsel of my heart—
The maid whom I adore.

I love to breathe at early day
The balmy air of spring,
When dew-drops hang on every spray,
And birds unnumber'd sing :

The blossoms white, the foliage green,
Expanding more and more,
Recall to me my bosom-queen,
The maid whom I adore.

O sweet is summer's glorious smile,
And autumn's promise rare ! .
But what, o'er land, or sea, or isle,
May with my love compare ?
So high in worth, surpassing far
All nature's precious store,
Is she—my bright, my leading star,
The maid whom I adore !

1842.

THE REDESDALE LASSIE

THE breath o' spring is gratefu',
As mild it sweeps alang,
Awakening bud an' blossom
The broomy braes amang ;
And wafting notes o' gladness
Frae ilk a bower and tree ;
Yet the bonnie Redesdale lassie
Is sweeter still to me !

How bright is summer's beauty,
When, smilin' far an' near,
The wildest spots o' nature
Their gayest livery wear :
And yellow cups and daisies
Are spread on ilka lea ;
But the bonnie Redesdale lassie
Mair charming is to me !

O sweet is mellow autumn,
When, wide o'er a' the plain,
Slow waves in rustlin' motion
The heavy-headed grain,
Or in the sunshine glancin'
And rowin' like the sea ;
Yet the bonnie Redesdale lassie
Is dearer far to me !

As heaven itsel', her bosom
Is free o' fraud or guile ;
What hope o' future pleasure
Is centred in her smile !
I wadna lose for kingdoms
The love-glance o' her e'e ;—
O ! the bonnie Redesdale lassie
Is life and a' to me !

INVITATION.

O'ER a' the sweet maidens
In England I've seen,
I rank you the fairest—
I place you the queen.
My love-swelling bosom
Yields homage to thee :
Will ye gang, bonnie lassie,
To Scotland wi' me ?

Dark, dark are your tresses,
Your wee mouth is meek ;
On your chin there's a dimple,
And clear is your cheek.
Your form is sae gracefu',
Your step light and free :
Come away, lovely lassie,
To Scotland wi' me !

I boast na o' riches,
I speak na o' gear ;
I say that I love you,
My words are sincere.

A heart leal and faithfu'
 Is a' I can gie :
 O come, my dear lassie,
 To Scotland wi' me !

We'll stray where the wildwood
 And pure waters meet ;
 I'll pu' ye the red rose
 And ilka thing sweet.
 Our talk of affection
 And true love will be :
 Will ye gang, bonnie lassie,
 To Scotland wi' me ?

On banks where the laverock
 Sits down on her nest,
 An' daisies grow thickly,
 Together we'll rest :
 O mine will be rapture
 When seated by thee :
 Come away, dearest lassie,
 To Scotland wi' me !

In dark days o' winter,
 When angry win's blaw,
 Our wee house will shield us
 Frae tempest and snaw.
 Wi' tale, sang, and music
 We'll make the hours flee :
 O haste ye, sweet lassie,
 To Scotland wi' me !

The clasp o' thy soft hand—
This sweet, melting kiss—
The glance o' thy dark e'e
Foretell me o' bliss.
Than monarchs or princes
Mair joyfu' I'll be,
When at hame, bonnie lassie,
In Scotland wi' thee !

•

MY NATIVE BOWER.



TAKE off this scarf of silk so fair,
My heart it cannot charm ;
Unclap the gold that binds my hair,
The bracelet on my arm ;
And loose that robe of fairest hue
Inwove with leaf and flower ;
They yield me not the peace I knew
Within my native bower.

Say not those spreading lawns are green,
Those waters sweetly glide ;
Nor tell me of the charming scene
By yonder forest side :

The spot I love is far away,
Dark hills above it tower ;
The streams are only sweet that stray
Around my native bower.

O lead me not amid the throng
Where pomp and splendour shine :
No music soft, no courtly song
Delights this ear of mine.
I would not list to lay or strain
Save that whose touching power
Recalls in brightest hues again
My lovely native bower.

Speak not of wealth—my lips have press'd
The cup and found it vain,—
Nor titles, else I had been bless'd ;
But give me back again
The russet dress a sister wove,
The smiles that every hour
Bespoke a mother's tender love,
And my sweet native bower !

EDITH ELLISON.

It's nought to me though lassies baw
Are lightly dancing o'er the green ;
There's ne'er a ane amang them a'
Can match wi' her I saw yestreen :
Her glance sae sweet, and bright her een,
Her waving locks sae glossy brown,
Her foot sae tight, her step how clean,—
My charming Edith Ellison !

We sat upon a flowery brae :
The crystal burnie wimpled by ;
The mellow sun in lustre gay
Was gliding down the ruddy sky ;
Afar he threw his golden dye
O'er rising bank and sloping down ;
And there I spoke o' love and joy
To winsome Edith Ellison.

The rose beside us bloom'd mair sweet ;
The closing daisies fairer grew ;
The herbage, springing at our feet,
Put on, we thought, a fresher hue.

I gazed within her een o' blue,
 And strove her kindly love to win ;
 Her smile bespoke affection true,—
 My gentle Edith Ellison.

How bless'd to be where she is nigh,
 And look upon her face sae fair,—
 To learn frae ilka gentle sigh
 Her heart is leal beyond compare !
 O'er a' the wealth and honours rare
 That mortals seek beneath the sun,
 Gie me but love and life to share
 Alang wi' Edith Ellison !

HER I LOVE BEST.

THOU morn full of beauty
 That chases the night,
 And wakens all nature
 To gladness and light,
 When warbles the linnet
 Aloof from its nest,
 O scatter thy fragrance
 Round her I love best !

Ye hills dark and lofty
That near her ascend,
If she in her pastime
Across thee shall wend,
Let every lone pathway
In wild flowers be drest,
To welcome the footsteps
Of her I love best !

Thou sun proudly sailing
O'er depths of the sky,
Dispensing beneath thee
Profusion and joy,
Until in thy splendour
Thou sink'st to the west,
O gaze not too boldly
On her I love best !

Ye wild roving breezes,
I charge you, forbear
To wantonly tangle
The braids of her hair :
Breathe not o'er her rudely,
Nor sigh on her breast,
Nor kiss you the sweet lip
Of her I love best !

Thou evening that gently
Steals after the day,
To robe with thy shadow
The landscape in gray,

O fan with soft pinion
My dearest to rest !
And calm be the slumber
Of her I love best !

Ye angels of goodness
That shield us from ill,
The purest of pleasures
Awarding us still,
As near her you hover,
O hear my request !
Pour blessings unnumber'd
On her I love best !

ELLEN.

Of wealth in profusion
I seek not to share ;
It brings but confusion,
With trouble and care.
One gem that is rarest
I seek to obtain :
O bring me my dearest—
My Ellen again !

Her eyes are the brightest
In lustre and hue :
Her step is the lightest
That brushes the dew.
She smiles like the blossom
Expanding in rain :
O give to this bosom
My Ellen again !

All objects in nature
Attractive or fair,
Recall every feature—
Her form and her air ;
But morning is lonely—
The evening how vain !
O bring to me only
My Ellen again !

I loved her from childhood
And cannot forget,
By streamlet and wildwood,
The spots where we met.
Ye powers bending o'er me,
O listen my strain—
In safety restore me
My Ellen again !

SWEET NATURE

SWEET nature, love, is wreathing
 Her brow with festal flowers,
And sweetest perfume breathing
 Throughout those leafy bowers :
Beneath us and above,
 From the mountains to the sea,
Her smile on earth, my love,
 Is like look of thine to me !

The winds of spring blew coldly
 Upon me day and night :
My heart beat never boldly
 Till thou didst bless my sight.
And now where'er we range
 There are garlands on each tree ;
Even so the happy change
 That thy love has wrought on me !

'Tis winter when without thee,
 I'm like the silent earth ;
And summer comes about thee,
 Inciting me to mirth.

Each flower of promise bright
In my bosom blossoms free,
As thy genial warmth and light
Like the sunshine rests on me !

Of lovely things the fairest
In garden or in field,
Of gems by far the rarest
The spacious globe can yield,
'Tis thou my longing eye
Most of all delights to see :
While I live and when I die,
Oh, be absent not from me !

A SHEPHERD'S LIFE.

ELIZA fair, the mirth of May
Resounds from glen and tree ;
Yet thy mild voice, I need not say,
Is dearer far to me.
And, while I thus a garland cull
To grace that brow of thine,
My cup of pure delight is full,—
A shepherd's life be mine !

Believe me, maid, the means of wealth,
Howe'er profuse they be,
Produce not pleasure that in health
Is shared by you and me !
'Tis when, elate with thoughts of joy,
We find a heart like thine,
That objects grateful glad the eye ;—
A shepherd's life be mine !

O mark, Eliza, how the flowers
Around us sweetly spring ;
And list how in these woodland bowers
The birds with rapture sing.
Behold that vale whose streamlet clear
Flows on in waving line :
Can paradise more bright appear ?—
A shepherd's life be mine !

Now, dearest, not the morning bright
That dawns o'er hill and lea,
Nor eve, with all its golden light,
Can charm me without thee.
To feel the magic of thy smile,
To catch that glance of thine,
To talk to thee of love the while,
A shepherd's life be mine !

YES OR NO.

“ O NANNIE, hae dune wi’ your sporting,
And list a proposal that’s fair ;
I’m earnest, I tell ye, in courting,
And winna be trifled wi’ mair.
The looks and the smiles that ye gie me
Hae heezed up my heart in a glow ;
See just at a word if ye’ll hae me,
I hope ye’ll nae langer say ‘ No.’ ”

“ Why, ANDREW, lad, what’s a’ the hurry ?
Ye ken I am constant and leal :
There’s mair ever ready to marry
Than what hae the luck to do weel.
To comfort your sweetheart endeavour,
Nor take ye a naysay amiss ;
But lovingly seek for her favour
Afore she can answer ye ‘ Yes.’ ”

“ Hont, NAN, it avails na delaying :
Ye want to be follow’d sae lang,
While here am I begging an’ praying
That ye to the kirk will but gang.

I ne'er when I'm dealing take credit ;
 I like na a wooer that's slow ;
 I've made up my mind to be weddit ;
 Now, lassie, nae langer say ' No.'"

" Weel, then, to prevent a' disputing,
 As I maun the truth to ye tell,
 I fain wad believe without doubting
 Ye like me as weel as yoursel' :
 We'll court a while langer on trial,
 And when I am certain o' this,
 I'll offer nae farther denial,
 But readily answer ye ' Yes.'"

TO PLEASE YE

To speak to me o' sic a thing,
 Indeed ye are na blate ;
 I often wonder what ye mean—
 Ye plague me air' and late ;
 And though I aye deny ye, still
 Ye winna let me be :
 Sae mind it's just to please ye
 I let ye sit wi' me.

The little table we maun hae
Atween us a' the night ;
And I shall set a candle there
To gie us pleasant light ;
For ye've to keep your distance, lad,
An' dinna make sae free :
It's only just to please ye
I let ye visit me.

Or should there neither board nor light
Come you and me between,
Ye'll keep your arms frae 'bout my neck,
Nor on my shouther lean.
We shall at least hae seats a-piece :
I'll no sit on your knee :
And mind it's just to please ye
If ye get a kiss o' me.

Now, Sandie, a' your tales o' love
O'er me will hae nae sway ;
I were a fule did I believe
A single word ye say :
But if there's nae resisting ye,
Or I should yielding be,
It's no to please mysel' but you
Gin e'er we wedded be !

SONG BEFORE BATTLE.

WHOEVER holds his country dear
And glories in her name,
May now with ready sword or spear
Acquire a patriot's fame.
Before us see our mustering foes
In countless squadrons lie ;
The hour is come when we must close
To conquer or to die !

O, who would live to toil and sweat
A tyrant's frown beneath ;
Or who, before a monarch's feet,
His dearest rights bequeath ?
A nation's curse be on his head,
His haunts let mankind fly,
Whose craven bosom heaves with dread
To conquer or to die.

With freedom as our noble aim,
We take the battle-field,
Resolved to vindicate our claim,
And never, never yield !

In front of such a powerful host,
Their vengeance we defy ;
Our steel shall teach them to their cost
We conquer or we die.

Our hearts are firm, our cause is good ;
'Tis ours the prize to gain ;
We feel assured our precious blood
Will not be shed in vain.
We give our all to liberty,
Upon her altars high ;
While slave and tyrant both will see
We conquer or we die.

How great our glorious privilege
To turn the swelling tide
Pour'd on us by a despot's rage
For empire far and wide !
We feel the mounting of the blood,
The bosom's earnest sigh,
The fearless will in fitting mood
To conquer or to die.

Now, now come forth my trusty brand !
I'll sheath thee never more
Till our revered and honour'd land
Be free from shore to shore :
Thine edge I'll prove in deadliest fight,
Or midst the carnage lie ;
So God in heaven defend our right !
We conquer or we die !

DRINKING SONG.

[When the *Newcastle Magazine*, which extended from 1822 to 1830, was in course of publication, James Talfer contributed, among other articles, several papers entitled "Literary Gossip." No. V. of the series, which comprised the following song, was written by the author of this volume, and appeared in March, 1827. Only a portion of the trifle was at that time printed. It is now given entire.]

COME, push round the bottle,—ye'll pledge me I'm
sure ;
Fill brimful your glasses, and "Here's to the poor!"
Amang them fu' fairly ourselves we may place,
And feel neither bashfu', nor think it disgrace :
Nae shame rests wi' poortith, whate'er folk may say ;
Then let us be social sae lang as we may !

It's true that nae lairdships hae fa'en to our lot ;
Yet still we're contented, and why should we not ?
Like their offspring, unskilfu' a sixpence to stretch,
Our forbears were owre honest to make themsel's rich ;
But our health is a fortune we share ilka day ;
Now drink and be merry sae lang as we may !

If our purses are slender, our wants are but few ;
We're aye douce i' our auld claes and braw i' our new :
What we buy we aye pay for,—nae credit we spier ;
Can our nobles say that wha hae thousands a year ?

But we're here where we stand, independent as they ;
Then let us be jovial sae lang as we may !

If the fountain o' justice be like a spring-well,
I've oft thought it queer, and I canna weel tell,
How the chiels round about it seem a' honest men,
Tho' amang them the knaves are as nine out o' ten ;
Yet the limbs o' the law, we can keep them at bay ;
Now let us be joyfu' sae lang as we may !

The priest often tells us a' earthly desire
Should be curb'd, that our souls may to heaven aspire ;
And he says we maun follow through trials our track,
That the world and its pleasure we cast at our back ;
But his dues or his tythes did he e'er fling away ?
Let us drink and be cheerfu' sae lang as we may !

Baith the doctor and vicar they fend unco weel,
Though the tane fight grim Death and the tither the
Deil ;
O' their zeal for our good 'twad be sinfu' to doubt ;
But there's ae thing we're sure o', an' needna dispute,—
If we die or be doom'd they maun each hae their pay ;
We'll drink and be happy sae lang as we may !

NURSERY SONG.

[The chorus is old, and still maintains its popularity among the nurses of Northumberland.]

THE kye are come hame,
And I see na my Willie ;
The kye are come hame,
And I see na my bairn :
I'd rather lose a' the kye
Than lose my Willie ;
I'd rather lose a' the kye
Than lose my bairn !

Gang up the back wood
And come down the lang loaning,
Syne round by the dam
And alang the mill race :
• Away now and seek for
My charming wee Willie ;
My heart would be eased
Gin I saw but his face !
The kye are come hame, &c.

His cheeks are mair bright
Than the sun-redden'd apple ;
His lips are as sweet
As the balm o' the bee :
His fine glossy hair hings
In ringlets sae bonnie ;
O, naething in life
Is sae welcome to me !
The kye are come hame, &c.

His breath is as pure
As the scent o' wild roses ;
His skin is as white
As the new driven sna' :
'Mang bairns were there fifty,
I'll bet ye a wager,
My winsome wee Willie's
The flower o' them a' !
The kye are come hame, &c.

FISHERS' GARLANDS.

L

VISIT TO REDESDALE.

TUNE—"Down the burn, Davie."

THE sun is up, a sweeter morn
Ne'er dawn'd on fishers' e'e ;
How bright appears the springing corn,
The leaf's on ilka tree.
The mists are gane, the day seems fair ;
There's joy by hill and shore ;
And Rede is gliding onward there—
The stream we prized of yore.

We'll up by lanely Saughenside,
And then our sport begin,
Where, sweeping o'er the channel wide,
The bickering waters rin.
On ilka pool the ripple's fine ;
We've fish'd them a' before ;
And ance again, wi' heuk and line,
We'll scan them as of yore.

At Birdhopehaugh, and sweet Todlaw,
 The finny spankers lie,
 Near jutting craig or spreading shaw,
 Secure frae sun an' sky ;
 But we can lightly thraw a flee
 Each distant eddy o'er,
 And switch them out by stane an' tree
 As we hae done of yore.

'Neath Lisha-brig, fu' pure and soft,
 O'er holm and upland brown,
 Which we in youth hae traversed oft,
 The westlin wind comes down.
 Sweet is its breath, but sweeter still,
 Upon the gurly shore,
 Wi' pliant rod our creels to fill,
 As oft we did of yore.

While on we stray, an' winding turn
 Round meadows waving green,
 We'll come to bonnie Otterburne,
 Of a' the dale the queen.
 Beyond her battle-field of fame,
 Renown'd in British lore,
 She has on us a deeper claim—
 She was our *home* of yore.

Then wi' our host,¹ wha, like his sire,
 Is worthy, kind, and free,
 The flowing bowl shall mirth inspire,
 And tales o' fun and glee.

¹ The late Robert Anderson.

We'll pledge, what ilka honest heart
 Will echo frae its core :—
 “ Redewater, aye ! ”—“ The fisher's art ! ”—
 “ The friends we loved of yore ! ”

1842.

II.

COQUET-SIDE.

TUNE—“ Tak' your auld cloak about ye.”

Now May has donn'd her kirtle rare,
 The day is lang, an' short the e'en ;
 The open sky how smiling fair,
 The burnies rin in glitterin' sheen.
 Newcastle smoke we left yestreen ;
 Wi' Morpeth frien's we wadna bide ;
 And now, by bank and meadow green,
 We'll spend the day on Coquet-side.

O had we met when we were young
 Wi' *Roxby* here an' *Doubleday*¹—
 The lads unmatch'd that sweetly sung
 Sic fishing lays as last for aye ;

¹ Animated by a spirit of kindred genius, like that which influenced the dramatists, Beaumont and Fletcher, the late Mr Robert Roxby and Mr Thomas Doubleday wrote conjointly “The Coquetdale Fishing Songs,”—a series of lyrics the very best of the kind in our language.

What rare delight to see the twae,
 Wi' flees in order, skim the tide,
 And hear the wit that well'd away
 Whene'er they cam' to Coquet-side !

The gloomy castle wa's are near,
 And Halystane lies down the glen :
 We'll fettle now our fishing gear,
 And fairly fa' to wark like men.
 O' town-bred folk no ane i' ten,
 Wi' a' their senseless, empty pride,
 Can e'er the bliss, the pleasure ken
 That we enjoy at Coquet-side.

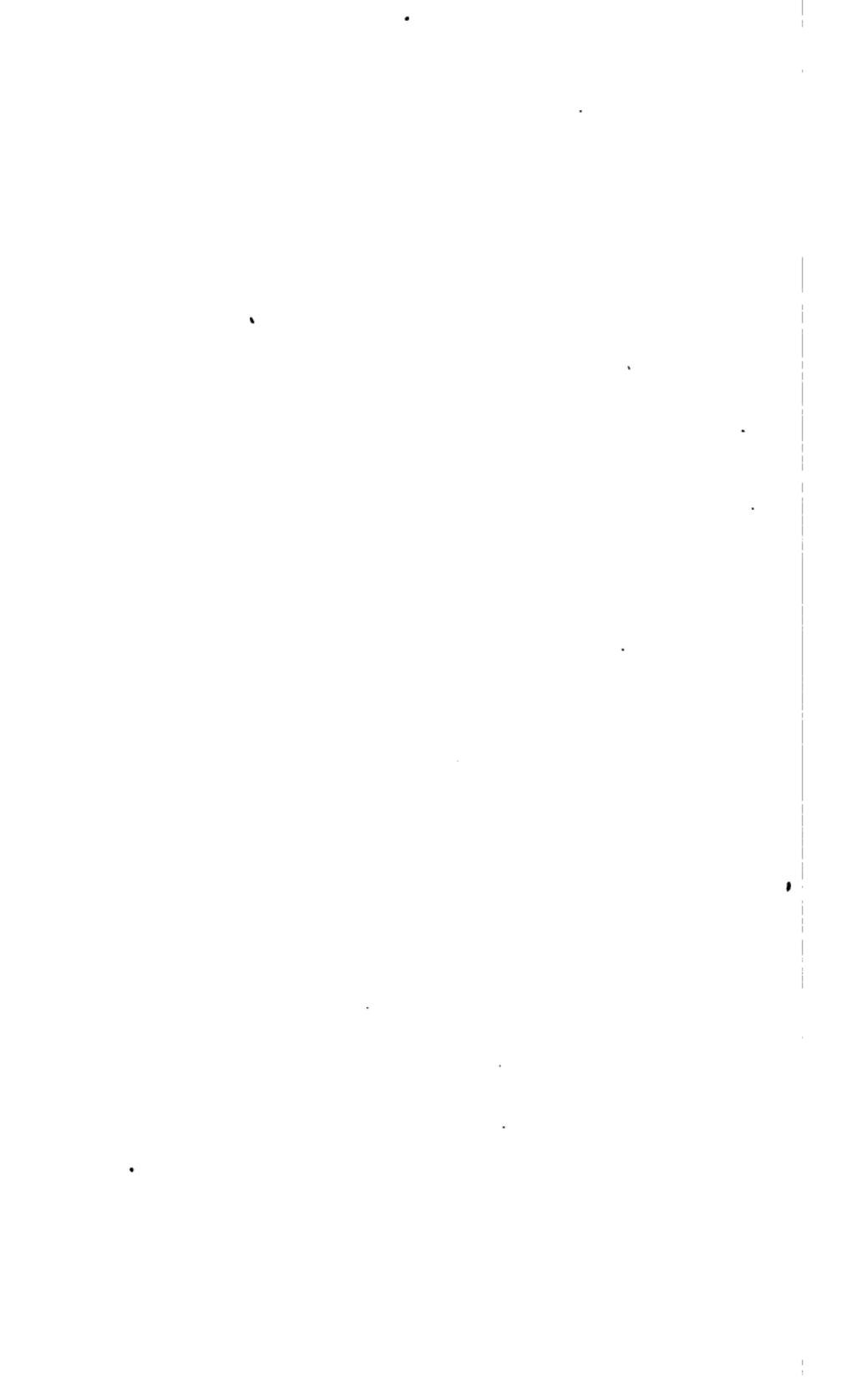
See trouts are loupin' left and right ;
 Now let your flees fa' softly down :
 The rain that patter'd through the night
 Has dyed the water lightly brown.
 Ye've nabb'd him there—a switchin' loun—
 In stream or pool nae mair he'll glide ;
 Three fish like that are worth a crown
 To chiel's like us on Coquet-side.

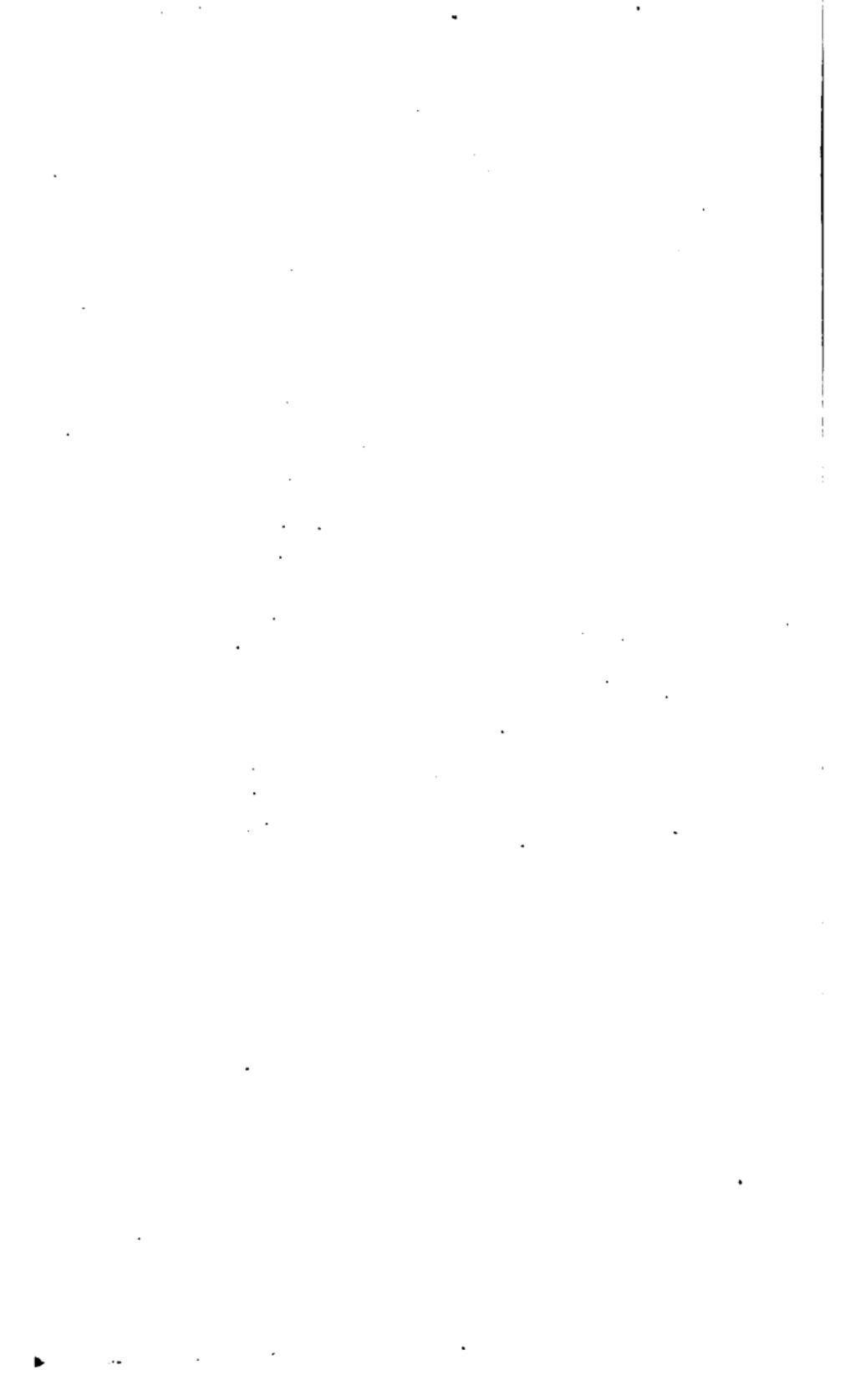
Another's heuk'd—I hae him fast ;
 The danglin' bob is snatch'd and a' ;
 These lucky moments winna last ;
 We hae a rise at ilka throw.
 How fine the welcome breezes blaw,
 And curl in waves the dimplin' tide !
 Sic sport as this I never saw :
 What think ye now o' Coquet-side ?

Your kings might prize a shepherd's lot,
Wi' streams below and hills abune ;
For blessings grace his cozy cot
When heart and saul are baith in tune.
If life be like a day in June,
As we hae choice o' England wide,
Wha wadna spend the afternoon,
And gloamin' too, by Coquet-side ?

1864.

THE END.







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